



Ancient Ethnography

New Approaches

Edited by

Eran Almagor and Joseph Skinner

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Preface

The origins of this volume can be traced back to the final leg of a lengthy journey from one conference to another, from Lampeter to Liverpool in June 2009. The idea to assemble a group of researchers employing new approaches to the study of ancient ethnography was subsequently realized in a panel at the 2010 Classical Association Conference in Cardiff. Its success and the interest it generated prompted us to expand the project by soliciting papers from scholars whose work we admired with a view to shedding new light upon a field of enquiry that was in danger of appearing moribund. The results are presented here. Many people made this wonderful and rewarding experience possible, and we would like to thank them all. Our warmest thanks are due to Deborah Blake, our original contact at Duckworth, who accompanied the volume from its inception to (almost) its final form only to be succeeded by the ever-helpful and incredibly patient Charlotte Loveridge at Bloomsbury Academic. Special thanks are also due to Thomas Harrison, our original panel chair, for invaluable help and advice throughout the duration of this project. We are grateful to the original participants of the panel, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones and Katerina Oikonomopoulou, and to Anna Foka, for timely and vital assistance. We would also like to offer our warmest thanks to all those who agreed to submit chapters to the volume. Spread across four continents, their willingness to share their knowledge and ideas has made this an enlightening and wholly enjoyable experience. We are also grateful to our various friends and colleagues for their insightful comments. Eran would like to thank the British Academy (and the overseas fellowship scheme) for the opportunity to conduct research in the UK in the summer of 2009, thereby facilitating this collaboration. Heartfelt gratitude is also expressed to Christopher Pelling for sponsoring that research. We are deeply indebted to Emma Dench, both for her willingness to act as respondent to the volume and for the kind support and encouragement that she has provided throughout, and to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to reproduce the jacket illustration.

Eran Almagor
Joseph Skinner

Abbreviations

<i>AC</i>	L'Antiquité classique
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archaeology
<i>AJPh</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>ANRW</i>	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung
<i>ASNP</i>	Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Cl. di Lettere e Filosofia
<i>BMCR</i>	Bryn Mawr Classical Review
<i>CPh</i>	Classical Philology
<i>CQ</i>	Classical Quarterly
<i>FGrH</i>	Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker
<i>G&R</i>	Greece and Rome
<i>HSCP</i>	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
<i>ICS</i>	Illinois Classical Studies
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>MEFRA</i>	Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité
<i>PCPhS</i>	Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
<i>QUCC</i>	Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica
<i>RE</i>	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
<i>REA</i>	Revue des études anciennes
<i>RFIC</i>	Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica
<i>SCI</i>	Scripta Classica Israelica
<i>SyllClass</i>	Syllecta Classica
<i>TAPA</i>	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
<i>WS</i>	Wiener Studien

Introduction

Eran Almagor and Joseph Skinner

The history of ethnographic thought might at first seem wholly straightforward: a linear narrative describing the steady emergence of a literary genre predicated upon a simple dichotomy between ‘Greek’ or ‘Roman’, on the one hand, and the barbarian foreigner on the other. The simplicity of this narrative renders it immediately suspect, however.

First, there remain many aspects of ancient ethnographic inquiry that have yet to be explored in any detail. Topics such as audience reception and intertextual allusion have received uneven treatment at best. The role of power and agency has likewise been neglected with the result that both the precise manner and the means by which knowledge about foreign peoples was selectively constructed remains very much uncharted territory. Cases in which the ethnographic gaze of Greeks and Romans was turned upon their own manners and customs have likewise escaped scrutiny. There is also the question as to how this body of knowledge was variously reworked and appropriated in modern times.¹ Far from being simple or straightforward, the story of the function and development of ancient ethnographic enquiry is both complex and intriguing.

Second, recent shifts in outlook and approach within Classics, ancient history and other disciplines mean that certain (comparatively well-worn) themes or ideas relating to ethnographic inquiry now stand in need of review.² Tracing the history of ancient ethnography is not merely a matter of documenting a somewhat mechanical process whereby Greek or Roman norms were routinely juxtaposed with the barbarian ‘Other’.³ Instead, it entails a concerted and wide-ranging attempt to reconstruct creative responses to questions of identity and difference by individuals embedded within specific intellectual and cultural milieux – ‘Greek’, ‘Roman’ or ‘barbarian’.⁴ In order to fully understand the significance of these responses we must take into account the sophisticated play of ideas and values encapsulated within text and image. We must also be prepared to set ethnographic ‘texts’ in their wider context: a world characterized and to some degree shaped by high levels of intercultural contact, mobility and exchange. Ancient ethnographic inquiry emerges not as a passive end-product or epiphenomenon but an active attempt to variously classify and describe multiple points of similarity and difference in a manner that was constitutive of identity.

Defining ethnography

Ethnography as a term was first coined in the early nineteenth century to denote the formal description of foreign peoples, their habits and customs. Like so many other neologisms, the term was created by grafting two existing words together: the ancient Greek for 'people' (*ethnos*) and 'written or visual portrayal' (*graphie*).⁵ That ethnography existed in antiquity as a scientific discipline was for a long time taken for granted, not least because modern ethnographers and anthropologists were invariably keen to single out Herodotus, and to a lesser extent Hecataeus of Milteus, as 'father' of their (still nascent) disciplines.

More recently, however, the absence of any ancient term referring specifically to the study of foreign peoples has prompted some to question whether ancient authors did in fact view writing about foreigners as a discrete realm of enquiry. Concern has centred on the use of the term 'genre' since this has at times been understood to imply that ethnographic writing or knowledge crystallized in a unique form that could easily be distinguished from texts that we would normally assign to different realms of enquiry altogether: history, poetry or medical treatises. There are some who view the fact that ethnographic knowledge can be found in more or less identical forms across a wide variety of media as problematic, preferring instead to acknowledge the existence of a more varied array of ideas and representational practices that might more accurately be referred to as an ethnographic 'tradition' insofar as they found application across a wide variety of media.⁶ Conversely, others have argued that the apparent ubiquity of a (more or less) standardized set of conventions, vocabulary and tropes for describing peoples of different outlook and culture is itself proof that ethnography was recognized as a scientific genre in its own right. Or, to put it another way, the recognizability of ethnography as a relatively well-defined body of knowledge and ideas is not in itself thrown into doubt simply because the word 'ethnography' was unknown to Herodotus and his contemporaries.

One thing seems certain. However one approaches the problem of nomenclature, our ability to both identify and define ancient ethnography will to a large extent be dictated by where and, just as importantly, when we are looking. That ethnography emerged as a distinct category of knowledge is not in doubt. Tracking its course between early historiography, where the distinction between different types of intellectual enquiry is altogether blurred,⁷ and, for example, the early imperial period when the description of various barbaric groups is widely thought to have developed into a free-standing genre, is far from straightforward.⁸ As a putative corollary to Roman world empire, ethnography was, according to one view, detached from historical writing (with which it had initially been associated), with the result that research into the habits and customs of foreign peoples gradually developed into an independent field of inquiry.⁹ This shift towards compartmentalization is arguably borne out in the work of Strabo who separated his (lost) *History* from a *Geography* that included descriptions of foreign peoples.¹⁰ Even this separate field of inquiry remains a very different creature, however, from the ethnography characteristic of the 'Age of Empire' – for all the claims of practitioners keen to capitalize upon purported links to classical antiquity, or, indeed, the post-modern, post-colonial ethnographies of our own era.

At the time of the term's inception, 'ethnography' was widely understood to refer to the scientific description of those whom white, metropolitan audiences regarded as alien, barbarous or primitive. Once regarded as 'the handmaiden of imperialism', modern ethnography has moved far beyond such pejorative attitudes and racist stereotyping. For some it still entails the largely formulaic description of a particular group or culture from an etic or external perspective. For others, however, its meaning has both evolved and expanded so that ethnography is simply 'diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture' from the point of view of an outsider.¹¹ This shift in perspective within modern anthropology has led practitioners to consider alternative ways in which cultural difference might be represented or described. Modern ethnographers now use a variety of genres to describe a particular group or set of cultural practices. This can involve highlighting the dialogic nature of ethnographic enquiry, one which often relies upon interviews and conversations as a means of data-gathering or 'aesthetic ethnography' in which objects and images provide 'mesmerizing images of cultural practices'.¹² This encourages us to think in new and interesting ways about how ancient ethnographies are defined and created and to what ends. It is not the aim of this volume to impose a blanket definition of what ancient ethnography might entail, but rather to highlight the fruitful lines of enquiry that open up immediately the various tensions and contradictions surrounding its definition are laid bare.

Ethnography and identity: Us and them

The way in which we think about ancient ethnography has for a long time been shaped by how we think about Greco-Roman culture and identities. Both have attracted considerable scholarly interest during the last quarter-century or so, even if attention has primarily focused on questions of identity-construction, leaving ethnography somewhat on the sidelines as just one of a number of strategies through which a sense of Greek or Romanness might be delineated.¹³ Attempts to determine the origins of a sense of Greek collective identity have frequently involved scholars scouring epic and lyric poetry for references to 'Others' with whom a nascent community of Hellenes might be juxtaposed.¹⁴ In cases where they are detected, such references are also taken to denote some degree of interest in and knowledge of foreign peoples (although how this should be interpreted is disputed, as we shall see). These are most commonly seen as stepping stones on the road to the 'scientific' study of non-Greek peoples, which is how ethnographic enquiry is traditionally perceived or imagined.¹⁵

Precisely how and why these references to other groups are understood to reflect a sense of Greek cultural identity is a topic that needs to be explained. It derives from the fact that the relationship between the community of Hellenes and non-Greeks, the so-called 'barbarians', was invariably conceived as being structured by a series of dichotomies between the Greek self and its inversion: the alien, uncivilized Other. This was the line adopted in Edith Hall's hugely influential *Inventing the Barbarian* in which the fifth-century BC clash with Persia engendered an abrupt switch from a (hitherto vague) sense of ethnic identity to a cultural identity defined in terms of polar oppositions.¹⁶ Hall interpreted these early references to non-Greeks as the seeds that would

eventually produce the barbarian stereotype in what was widely understood to be an overtly condemnatory account of Greek ethnocentrism.¹⁷ The primary vehicle for Greek, or rather Athenian, self-definition was Attic tragedy but it was to the researches of early ethnographers that the tragedians turned in order to embellish their narratives with details that would both enthrall and titillate their audiences.¹⁸

Edith Hall's account of the invention of Greek identity reflects the influence of two authors in particular. The first is Edward Said upon whom Hall drew heavily for inspiration, leading to the now famous assertion that Aeschylus' *Persae* was the 'first file in the archive of Orientalism' (1989: 99) – the process whereby Asia was 'tamed and subordinated' to the Western imagination as decadent, effete and Oriental.¹⁹ The second is François Hartog whose *Le Miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* was published in French in 1980.²⁰ Hartog was reacting to the work of a group of thinkers, including the prominent anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who took the radical approach of applying structuralist models and paradigms to Greek culture and society.²¹ An English translation of Hartog's book was published in 1988, with Hall's *Inventing the Barbarian* following a year later. The combined impact on Anglo-American scholarship was colossal: backed by contemporary concerns reflecting an anxious multiculturalism and a string of ethnic conflicts that brought identity politics increasingly to the fore the Greek-barbarian dichotomy rapidly emerged as the dominant research agenda within Classics, provoking vigorous (and ongoing) debate as to whether Greek identity should be perceived in positive (i.e. inclusive) or negative (i.e. exclusive) terms.²²

Greek ethnography, and by extension its (later) Roman counterpart, was inevitably drawn into this debate which has since swung between those stressing the prevalence of proto-racism and pejorative stereotypes and those keen to emphasize more positive attitudes and an overall tendency towards inclusivity.²³ Notable interventions in this debate have included successive attempts to backdate the emergence of a barbarian stereotype to the late sixth century BC, shifting the focus from Athens to an increasingly embattled Ionia caught in the path of the Persian juggernaut,²⁴ and Benjamin Isaac's discussion of the evidence for an early form of racism which anticipates the classificatory schemas of the modern age by associating specific characteristics and moral values to racial types on the basis of physical attributes such as skin colour.²⁵ In contrast, a rather more positive attitude towards foreigners is argued for in Margaret Miller's study of Athenian receptivity towards and enthusiasm for Oriental imports, referred to as *Perserie*.²⁶ The most extensive and authoritative statement of this position to date can, however, be found in Erich Gruen's *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* which aims to overturn the way in which ancient attitudes towards foreigners are conceptualized.²⁷ Gruen argues forcefully that close scrutiny of ancient identity-construction reveals a reality far different from the negative stereotyping commonly associated with authors such as Aeschylus, Xenophon and Tacitus. Amidst the clamour of voices advocating the relative merits of positive and negative positions, calls for a more 'middle of the road' approach allowing for a 'warts and all' assessment of Greek attitudes towards foreign peoples have so far gone largely unheeded.²⁸

Whilst there is undoubtedly irrefutable evidence for the juxtaposition of the categories of 'Greek' and 'barbarian' in ancient depictions of the 'Other', the unswerving

emphasis upon the Greek–barbarian antithesis – upon which ancient ethnography is invariably deemed to have been predicated – has recently been called into question. Miriam Leonard has demonstrated that the structuralist paradigm by which Classicists and historians were so easily seduced was itself rooted in antiquity. Leonard argues that the start-point for this process was Lévi-Strauss's critical engagement with the Oedipus myth, which bears all the hallmarks of Freudian psychoanalysis and the structural linguistics of Saussure.²⁹ The resulting emphasis on a polarity of opposites would soon to be an all-too familiar feature both of structural analysis and Classics as a whole.³⁰ Where this leaves ancient ethnography is something of a moot point but the overwhelming rigidity of the Greek–barbarian paradigm can no longer be said to be predominant.

The effective downfall of the Greek–barbarian paradigm that saw the terms 'self' and 'other' become all but ubiquitous to Classics can in part be attributed to a shift in attitudes towards identity in general. As post-modern views as to how identities should be conceived gradually took hold, the unrelenting emphasis upon bipolar oppositions between Greek and barbarian began to ring increasingly hollow.³¹ Identities were increasingly being referred to in the plural as inherently complex, socially constructed and historically contingent. This formed a stark contrast with the idea of a unique and homogenous Greek or Roman identity that could be juxtaposed with various barbarian 'Others'. The effects can already be seen in recent work on ethnography under the Roman Empire. Greg Woolf's discussion of the new histories of the recently-conquered Roman West follows in the wake of earlier discussions of the archaic (Greek) ethnographic imaginary by focusing explicitly on the 'middle ground' that both separated and connected conquerors and conquered. His approach is an altogether more sophisticated portrait of the way in which imperial knowledge was selectively acquired and ordered.³² Woolf also addresses the difficult question as to how much credence we should pay to ancient ethnographies, arguing that recent emphasis on the poetics of ethnographic writing, which are now widely acknowledged, has led us too far down the road of regarding all ethnographies as imperial fantasies or an exercise in 'writing the self' that bears little or no relation to reality.³³

Emphasis on the poetics of ancient ethnography remains in many ways an advance, however, on earlier approaches that took ancient descriptions of foreign peoples largely at face value – the work of individuals whose output was seen as forming a vital precursor to the flowering of scientific knowledge that was the Enlightenment.³⁴ Scholars had formerly taken great pains to trace the gradual evolution of ethnography from hazy imaginings, myths and fairy tales characteristic of the Archaic *mentalité* to the rational and scientific prose traditions of the Classical period. The tendency to describe the origins and development of ethnographic inquiry solely in terms of a smooth sequence of evolutionary stages has now been largely abandoned, although this is not to say that the ethnographic imagination of archaic Greeks (in particular) has not attracted considerable attention, as the forerunner of prose descriptions of foreign peoples and a coherent sense of what it meant to be Greek or Roman in the first place.³⁵ It is worth questioning, however, at what point the ethnographic imagination can ever reasonably be said to have 'gone away'. Imagined ethnographies or imaginative reworkings of ethnographic tropes and conventions can be found in

everything from Lucian's *Journeys to the Moon* to a terracotta goose on wheels sporting a Scythian/Amazon rider (presumably a children's toy). Far greater attention needs to be paid to this wider ethnographic discourse if we are to understand fully the cultural contexts in which ancient ethnographies were selectively read and interpreted, the way in which ethnographic knowledge circulated, its function and status.³⁶

Approaches to early ethnography

Discussion of early Greek ethnography has always begun with Homer.³⁷ There has been a marked shift in attitudes, however, regarding the ethnographic content and/or function of Homeric epic. Edith Hall argued that archaic Greeks were, at best, only vaguely interested in foreign peoples, and that the various fragments of ethnographic information embedded in Homeric epic (e.g. epithets) lacked the coherence and vigour of ethnological science.³⁸ This encouraged a wider tendency to downplay the importance of early ethnographic interest, stressing the disappointingly small number of references to foreign peoples and the (similarly paltry) number of occasions on which some form of Greek–barbarian polarity was in evidence.³⁹ Attention has invariably focused upon whether an isolated instance in which the adjective *barbarophonos* (*Il.* 2.867, taken as authentic) in reference to the Carian host is justifiable grounds for inferring the existence of a nascent concept of the barbarian, especially related to imperfect speech.⁴⁰ However, the question of whether one can detect any evidence for negative stereotypes relating to 'Orientals' – notably 'Oriental' archers – has also been examined.⁴¹ Although opinion on these subjects remains noticeably divided,⁴² it is now widely agreed that an interest in identity per se is, in fact, apparent throughout the epic. Far from showing signs of disinterest in questions of difference, the manner in which identities are juxtaposed is of pivotal importance to the narrative structure of the poem.⁴³

The fact that Homeric heroes, Greek and non-Greek, shared a common language was for a long time something of a touchstone for scholars studying archaic Greek identity. This identity was invariably perceived as loosely defined or 'aggregative' until the coming of the barbarian in the fifth century BC.⁴⁴ Homeric heroes were, according to this logic, largely the same. This prevailing orthodoxy was significantly undermined, however, when Hilary Mackie demonstrated that the *Iliad* in fact goes to considerable lengths to contrast two models of social organization, or cultural systems, one Achaean the other Trojan. Homeric audiences were presented with two opposing speech-cultures that differed markedly in terms of their preferred genre, style, civic function and linguistic orientation, creating what was effectively 'an ethnography of speech' for either side.⁴⁵ The ethnographic function and content of Homeric epic has also been highlighted in other ways, however. François Hartog's discussion of Homeric themes and paradigms as vehicles for a 'poetic anthropology' has likewise provided a highly nuanced account of the way in which early Greeks explored the boundaries of human experience.⁴⁶ Hartog argued that the narrative space opened up by Odysseus' thwarted attempts to return to Ithaca provides an effective medium by which the principal categories by which society was ordered might be articulated. The *Odyssey* is

therefore described as an ‘anthropological text’, whose purpose was ‘to see and explain the world so as to explore it and represent it, ‘inhabit’ it and make it a world that was ‘human,’ that is to say Greek (Hartog 2001: 25–6).⁴⁷

Hartog’s thesis prompts us to think beyond the ‘text’ (which would have been encountered aurally in the vast majority of cases) to the myriad circumstances in which Homeric paradigms might have been called to mind by individual agents and the manner in which this related to their own sense of personal or group identity.⁴⁸ Whilst the full implications of this can only be the subject of speculation, we are left with a very clear sense of the richness and diversity of ideas and paradigms upon which an individual might realistically draw when seeking to conceptualize or explain ‘difference’.

The extent to which epic paradigms played a role in early ethnographic thought has also been a topic of considerable concern for Carol Dougherty whose focus on the ethnographic imagination adopts a self-styled ‘historicizing approach.’⁴⁹ According to Dougherty, the *Odyssey* itself constitutes an ethnographic text and should be read accordingly. It follows, therefore, that while Hartog’s ‘poetic anthropology’ relates to the (Greek) human condition in general, Dougherty’s understanding of the Homeric text is more introspective: the function of the ethnographic imagination is to ‘interrogate ... change and innovation at home as much as it is to address the anomalies of new worlds abroad.’⁵⁰ For both Dougherty and Hartog, however, both Odysseus’ journey home and ethnographic enquiry entail a return to the (Greek) ‘self’ so that Odysseus emerges, once again, as the embodiment of a culture’s ethnographic imagination.⁵¹

The utility of Homeric epic has been further demonstrated by Irad Malkin. Following a line of argument first laid down by Elias Bickerman in 1952, Malkin (1998) has likewise demonstrated that mythic figures such as Odysseus and other ‘returning heroes’ (*Nostoi*) were employed to mediate encounters with non-Greek others and conceptualize identity/ethnicity in the Archaic/Classical period.⁵² Odysseus figures prominently in such narratives as the archetypal ‘returning hero’, particularly linked with the wild and unknown and therefore typical of the ‘Greek ethnographic model for regarding and defining Others: heroic genealogy’, linked in this instance to the Euboian colonies of Pithekoussai and Kyme.⁵³ The *Nostoi* were also suitable for explaining migrations – unlike what is termed migration ethnography and distinct from ‘other kinds of Grecocentric ethnographies’ that sought either to retrospectively assimilate foreigners to migratory groups, for example, Arcadians, or to create their own *nostos* associations (as in the case of later Greek cities).⁵⁴

What this brief (and highly selective) survey demonstrates is that, even before the period in which formal ethnographies came into being, ‘texts’ such as the Homeric epics provided an important medium for reflecting on matters of cultural difference. These texts did not, of course, go away once ethnography proper became commonplace. Instead, they continued to circulate widely and were so deeply embedded within the cultural consciousness of contemporaries that their influence can often be detected in later treatises, notably descriptions of Egypt.⁵⁵ The opposition between the sorts of ethnography encountered in Homeric epic (epithets, stereotyping, etc.) and ethnological science is in many ways unhelpful – it being hard to think of *any*

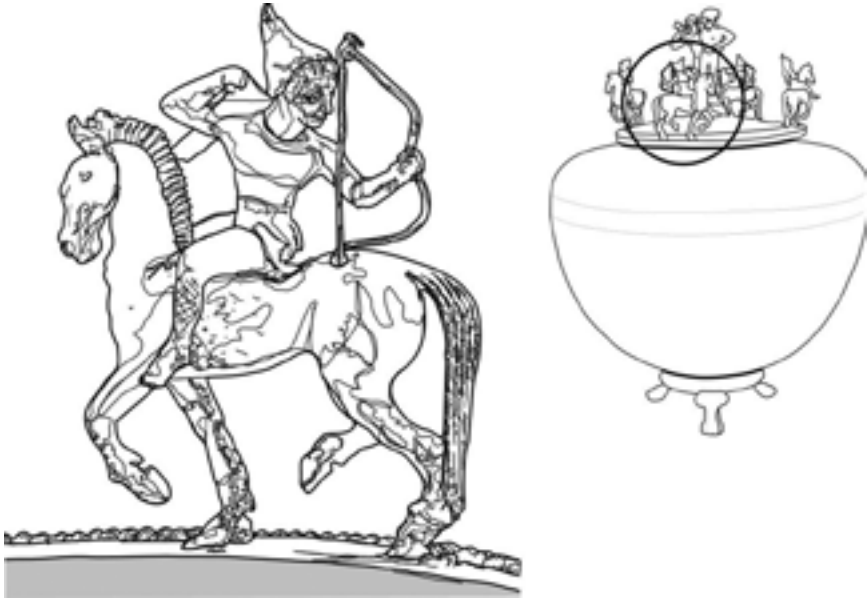


Figure 1 Statuette of mounted Amazon from the rim of a cinerary urn (inset), height c. 11cm. About 480 BC, Campanian Bronze, British Museum 560, from S. Maria di Capua Vetere. Drawn from photo: Haynes, S. (1965), *Etruscan Bronze Utensils*, pl. 3–4.

body of ethnographic material from antiquity that is *not* in some way predicated upon stereotypes.⁵⁶ Whether or not their application needs to be in any way systematic for it to be indicative of ethnographic interest is equally debatable. The process whereby groups or individuals selectively affirmed, denied or glossed over a variety of known qualities and stock attributes associated with a specific category of foreigner is indeed readily apparent, with certain elements achieving a degree of fixity in the case of written prose. It should be remembered, moreover, that prose accounts form only one component of wider discourses of identity and difference.⁵⁷ In short, there is more to ancient ethnography than meets the eye, both before and after set-piece ethnographies achieved widespread circulation.

Recent scholarship on ancient ethnography has also broadened the net still further to encompass a wide variety of responses to intercultural contact by ancient and pre-literate societies.⁵⁸ Whilst incredibly valuable in their own right, comparative studies of this nature can only hope to provide a rather generalized account of the way in which each individual culture formulated questions of identity and difference. They represent a significant departure, however, from that traditional bastion of scholarship on ancient ethnographic inquiry: historiographical studies. Here Herodotus looms large as the putative inventor of Great Historiography who was nonetheless an ethnographer during the initial stages of his career.⁵⁹ Much time and ink has been expended on examining the anatomy of Herodotean discourse, and whether he might be considered the 'Father of Ethnography' as well as the 'Father of History'.⁶⁰ Less attention by far has

been paid to individuals such as Strabo, in spite of the fact that his *Geography* remains one of the most comprehensive repositories of ethnographic knowledge to have survived from antiquity. Strabo's *Geography* populates the *oikoumene* with a vast range of barbarian and non-barbarian groups.⁶¹ After an introduction spanning books 1–2, each of the remaining 15 books is devoted to a different geographical area.⁶² Besides the expected depictions of *flora*, *fauna* and *thaumata* (plants, animals and wondrous items) in each region, Strabo also describes the unique characteristics of every group, its habits, appearance, religion, language, military organization, political structures and institutions and historical traditions.⁶³

How does this compare with material such as the statuettes of four prancing horses, ridden by archers, which adorned the rim of a cinerary urn of supposedly Etrusco-Campanian design?⁶⁴ (Fig. 1) Sporting pointed caps, long-sleeved jerkins and patterned trousers, the figures in question are, in a number of cases, depicted delivering what would later be referred to as a 'Parthian shot' – turning in the saddle to loose an arrow whilst still at the gallop. Whereas the manner in which individuals 'engaged', whether singly or collectively, with such an object cannot be gauged with any degree of certainty, the suggestion that it would have prompted self-conscious reflection upon one or more points of cultural difference does not seem overly far-fetched. The artist(s) in question certainly made a conscious effort to represent cultural difference. Relating such material imaginings to ethnographic prose authors is far from easy, but such attention to detail places it on a par with material such as Strabo's *Geography* insofar as it is indicative of a remarkable degree of knowledge and interest in the foreign or alien on behalf of both artist and audience.⁶⁵

Ancient ethnography: New approaches

This book is devoted to exploring what ancient Greeks, Romans and others knew, imagined or remembered about neighbouring peoples and those further afield. It examines the diverse contexts in which knowledge and ideas about 'foreigners' were generated, the motives underpinning their selective use and reworking, and the mechanisms by which they were relayed to wider audiences. It also examines the intellectual and cultural contexts which have shaped the way in which ancient accounts of 'foreigners' are studied in modernity. In doing so it highlights the benefits of a more pluralistic approach to ancient ethnography by examining not only self-consciously 'ethnographic' texts – if such exist – but also a variety of other media and contexts. Both its outlook and approach have been calibrated to fit an age in which the epistemological boundaries separating the (modern) disciplines of geography, history and ethnography had yet to be erected and in which literacy was itself far from universal, especially in earlier periods, and certainly for large sections of ancient societies.⁶⁶ Ethnographic 'texts' might be encountered in a variety of contexts – aurally during rhapsodic performances or public lectures delivered by peripatetic sages or court ethnographers, as well as in written prose and visual culture. Consequently, the terms 'ethnography' or 'ethnographic' will be employed throughout this volume to refer both to the description of foreign peoples, whether in poetry or prose, and to popular

interest and ideas concerning groups that were somehow viewed as 'different'. Rather than restricting ourselves to a few canonical texts, we will extend our definition of ancient ethnography to encompass any act of representation indicative of an interest in the habits and customs of foreign peoples.⁶⁷

The chapters presented in this volume adopt a variety of scholarly approaches to tease out some of the strands of this wider 'ethnographic discourse' through which groups and individuals thought about questions of identity and culture in a reflexive fashion and via the use of a variety of scholarly methods, disciplines and *corpora*. This polyphony is offset by a shared commitment to two basic principles that bring unity and coherence to the collection as a whole. First, is the assumption that ancient audiences were active participants in an overarching discourse in which notions of culture, power and identity were routinely scrutinized, contested and defined.⁶⁸ Second, is the principle that there is much to be gained from examining how ethnographic knowledge was variously obtained, categorized, disseminated and subsequently received in both antiquity and modernity.⁶⁹ The result is a collection of essays that variously nuance and qualify existing orthodoxies concerning the exact nature, origins, range, development and import of ethnographic thought and descriptions, incorporating hitherto overlooked or rarely-discussed material and adopting fresh approaches to old topics now in need of revision. Taken as a whole, they have the potential to advance our understanding of the intellectual and cultural milieux that gave rise to 'different ways of seeing',⁷⁰ the dissemination, alteration and subsequent reception of ethnographic traditions, and the extent to which this and similar material represented not only the product but also a major constitutive element of shifting notions of culture, power and identity.⁷¹

Our volume begins with a chapter set in late sixth-century BC Ionia in which Hyun Jin Kim seeks to explain precisely how and why the Greek–barbarian antithesis emerged. The chapter maps out the development of Greek ethnography and geographic knowledge in that period and asserts that Persian and more broadly Near Eastern 'ethnographic' endeavours and geographic knowledge, in addition to Persian military pressure, had a significant impact on the formulation of key features of first the Ionian, then later Classical Greek, representation of Greeks and non-Greeks. It also advances the proposition that the very word '*barbaros*' is not a Sumero-Akkadian derivation, but an Old Persian loanword in Greek and that the variety of features associated with the 'barbarian' in Classical Greek literary discourse can best be explained when this Persian context is taken into consideration. The Ionian interaction with the Near East in the late sixth century BC thereby determined the articulation of both the 'barbarian' and the Greeks' image of themselves in later Classical contexts.

Our second chapter is equally preoccupied with charting the origins of ethnographic enquiry. Kostas Vlassopoulos studies stories that are either attributed to non-Greeks by Herodotus or else relayed by his non-Greek protagonists in order to explore patterns of intercultural communication in the archaic and early classical Mediterranean. This chapter explores the diversity and range of the stories of 'Others', their formation and circulation, the different sorts of intercultural encounters that may have underpinned them and the function that such stories might have played in interactions between Greeks and non-Greeks. The chapter paints a far more complex

picture of what was essentially an ongoing process of interaction, communication and translation, rather than a heavily polarized and altogether static juxtaposition of Greeks and barbarians.

Following in the wake of Herodotus and his obscure but no less important contemporaries, various scholars and authors proved themselves equally keen to engage with this wider ethnographic discourse. Rosie Harman tackles the issue of the ethnographic gaze in Xenophon's *Anabasis* by posing a series of questions concerning the effects that its scenes of vision and spectatorship might have had on its audiences: as the reader encountered foreign peoples through the eyes of Greeks, did he (or she) easily identify with the Ten Thousand? What happened when the Greek experience was expressed through visions of fellow Greeks and was the reader's relationship with the mercenaries challenged on occasions in which they themselves were exposed to the eyes of foreign viewers? Harman's chapter shows how Xenophon's portrayal of these varied visual interactions tells us much about the complexities of Greek self-consciousness in the early fourth century BC.

Moving to the early Hellenistic period, Paul Kosmin argues that Megasthenes' *Indica* is an apologetic sort of ethnography and an ideologically charged response to a particular political context. This is shown directly by reference to the Seleucid elephant. Investigating the close relationship between Megasthenes' ethnography and Seleucid court discourse, the chapter demonstrates how Megasthenes' description of India served a legitimizing purpose for Seleucus I and his actions in India. Another example from the Hellenistic period is discussed in Jacek Rzepka's chapter on ethnographic traditions surrounding the ancient Aetolians. Although viewed by Greek or Roman authors as either partly or wholly barbaric, precisely how the ancient Aetolians perceived themselves is itself far from clear. One way of answering the query is by studying stories of two Aetolian heroes and their relations to ethnographic depictions, namely, those of Titormus – found in Athenaeus (10.4.13), Eustathius (I.198) and Aelian (VH 12.22) – and Polycritus – found in Phlegon of Tralles (*FGrH* 257 F 36) and Proclus (*In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, vol. II, 115).

During Roman imperial times, the ethnographic body of knowledge and literary form assumed a different character, and was used in various ways. Greg Woolf offers a novel approach to Tacitus' *Germania* and the role that religion and gods (Roman and barbarian) play in it. This chapter proposes that the work reflects a geographical zoning from the known (with its Caesarian echoes) to the unknown across a zone where Rome's divine and historicized mission is more prominent than any ethnographic notice – and to the more distant edges of the world where the gods of the Germans contribute to their strangeness and their incomprehensibility in Roman terms.

Eran Almagor explores the literary use of the ethnographic digressions in Plutarch's biographies. While recounting the interaction of his Greek and Roman heroes with other nations and ethnic groups, Plutarch inserts relatively extended depictions of these groups and their habits. Instead of deeming these passages irrelevant to the stories, this chapter addresses the *Lives* of Camillus, Theseus and Pompey, and proposes that the ethnographic details found in them have important narratological significances, in particular, that they are employed in the biographies in order to

characterize the protagonist of each *Life*. In other words, the chapter shows how Plutarch portrays *ethos* through *ethnos*.

An intriguing case of the 'ethnography of consumption' (i.e. a cross-cultural comparison of consumption habits, cooking, eating, and drinking customs, and the civic institutions that add regularity, structure, and meaning to them) is tackled by Katerina Oikonomopoulou, who studies the fourth book of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. Here, the function of this book in Athenaeus' entire project is considered, along with Athenaeus' own shifting stance towards his ethnographic material in his dual role of its editor and commentator, reflecting on the geographical and conceptual matrix that betrays a centuries-old Greek tradition of ethnographic writing.

The reception of ancient ethnographies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a topic treated in Chapters 9 and 10. Joseph Skinner examines the role that ancient ethnography played in framing the understanding and experience of a multitude of British colonial administrators, scientists and adventurers, exploring the way in which modern conceptions of ethnography and identity were projected back into the past with profound implications for the way in which both classical authors and their works were respectively 'received' and categorized. The chapter focuses on India's north-west frontier, and specifically the way in which descriptions of the manners and customs of the tribes of Kafiristan became inextricably intertwined with myth and history at the very time that modern ethnography was emerging as a scientific discipline. Adopting a more biographical angle to the study of ethnographic receptions, Thomas Harrison traces the interaction between ancient and modern ethnographies in the interrelated work of two brothers: George and Henry Rawlinson. The chapter reassesses the reputation of the Rawlinsons in the light of recent critiques of 'Orientalism' and focuses on the ways in which they presented themselves vis-à-vis the nascent disciplines of Classics and Oriental Studies. The study of the two brothers' subtly contrasting engagement with both Herodotus' *Histories* and a wide variety of foreign peoples (past and present) offers unique insights into the way in which the brothers Rawlinson conceived both their respective fields of study and a magnificently variegated and complex 'Orient'.

Finally, Emma Dench's postscript, *The Scope of Ancient Ethnography*, casts a critical eye both over the volume as a whole and the implications thus posed for the future study of ancient ethnographic discourse. Her discussion of future avenues of inquiry seeks to re-orientate our perspective as to what ancient ethnography might entail, its remit and function as a mode of representation. Dench challenges us to look further and range wider in our discussion of ancient ethnographic discourse to encompass visual and popular ethnographies, the importance of ethnographic display and auto-ethnographies in which the non-Greek or Roman 'subject' appropriates the literary traditions of their putative masters to pen their own account of their manners and customs. We are left with a clear sense of the potential benefits of re-thinking ancient ethnography from an entirely different perspective. If we look beyond the (largely) Western treatises written in 'scientific' prose we will encounter a wealth of (largely unexplored) material testifying to the diverse ways in which one might think about culture from an outsider's perspective. The history of ethnographic thought is by no means as transparent or straightforward as one might think.

Notes

- 1 Cf. Romm (1992: 72, 75); Bartsch (2006). Reception: Canfora (1979), Benario (1990), Kloft (1990); Harrison (2008). Cf. Mayhew (2011) on geographical notions.
- 2 Cf. recent work on the reader's response or the use of irony in ancient texts: O'Gorman (2000), Baragwanath (2008).
- 3 Cf. Balsdon (1979), Sordi (1979), Dauge (1981), Syed (2005).
- 4 For the ethnography of 'Others', see Kuhrt (2002), Booth (2005), Poo (2005), Sadler (2005).
- 5 The earliest evidence for the concept 'ethnography', according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, dates to 1834 (*Penny Cycl.*, II.97) while the corollary 'ethnology' dates to 1842 (Prichard, *Nat. Hist. Man*, 132). The first conceptual differentiation between the two notions appeared in 1878 (Reclus, *Encycl. Brit.*, VIII, 613). See J. Gould and W. L. Kolb (eds), *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, s.v. 'Ethnology', 245–6.
- 6 Descriptions of foreign peoples can be found, after all, both in works with non-specific titles such as *Geography* or 'Enquiry' (*Historiê*) and in those in which the title is derived from the people or region upon which they were based (e.g. *Lydiaka* for a work on Lydia/Lydians). See Woolf (2011) and chapter six of this volume.
- 7 See Skinner (2012).
- 8 Important stages in its development would, according to this view, include the systematic collection and classification of Greek and non-Greek political constitutions by Aristotle and his associates (Aristot. *Rh.* 1360a 33f. Cf. *Pol.* 1256a 30ff., Varro, *Ling.* 7,70; Cic. *Fin.* 5,11).
- 9 Cf. König and Whitmarsh (2007: 37). But even here matters are far from straightforward. The ancient term that appears to come closest to the modern notion of ethnographic enquiry – at least in the time of Strabo – is 'Chorography'. Strabo's second book differentiates between two ways of using maps to depict lands both familiar and foreign. The *geographic* map (ὁ γεωγραφικὸς πῖναξ) provides the 'form and size' of the land and describes its character and what part of the world (γῆ) it is (2.5.13). The *chorographic* map (ὁ χωρογραφικὸς πῖναξ), on the other hand, is abundant with 'continents, and peoples and the good locations of cities' (2.5.17). In other words, Chorography is more detailed and region-orientated whilst Geography depicts the world in general and schematic terms. Among the details it supplies (besides topography, climate, etc.) is also the account of groups residing in the area. While the two terms were differentiated in antiquity, sometimes they were interchanged indiscriminately. For instance, Pomponius Mela's work was termed *De Chorographia*, even though it was a general description of the world. See Van Passen (1957: 2), Nicolet (1991: 107, 172), Dueck (2000: 154–5). As Dueck (2000: 165–9) has shown, Strabo's work combines both aspects, being a work that is a Geography, insofar as it encompasses the entire world, but is made up of Chorographies, which deal with variant sections of the *Oikoumene* (cf. 8.8.1).
- 10 Strabo calls his other work 'historical notes' (1.1.22–3), and in another place 'matters after Polybius' (11.9.3). They might be two different works (see Dueck 2000: 69–75), yet Jacoby (*FGrH* 91), who collected the fragments of the lost volumes, assumes that the 'matters' included the 'notes'. The Suda (s.v. 'Polybius') has the following account: 'Strabo wrote "post-Polybian matters" [ἐγραψε δὲ καὶ Στραβῶν Ἀμασεὺς τὰ μετὰ Πολύβιον, ἐν βιβλίοις μγ'] in 43 volumes.' See Kidd (1988: 1.5, 2.957) and Aujac (1969: xxvi–xxix). This separation into Geography and History is especially

- noteworthy, as both works were probably intended for the same readership (1.1.22-3). Note, however, that Strabo has already described the political institutions of the Parthians (περὶ τῶν Παρθικῶν νομίμων) in his History, as he claims (11.9.3).
- 11 See Clifford (1988: 9). Clifford is at pains to emphasize that modern ethnography exists in both traditional and innovative forms. For a robust critique of the latter, see Ingold (2008) and Forbes (2007: xvi–vii, ch. 2). For related discussion, see Skinner (2012: 6).
 - 12 Clair (2003: 92).
 - 13 See Bohak (2005), Isaac (2006), Boatwright (2012) and the essays in Geus and Thiering (2012).
 - 14 For example, Van der Valk (1953), Bowra (1960), Thomas (1982), Hall (1989: 7, 10, 22–7, 30–2, 37–40).
 - 15 Notably Müller (1972–80).
 - 16 See esp. pp. 1–3, 5–6, 56. Cf. Jüthner (1923: 3), Ehrenberg (1935: 44–62, 127–39), Oliver (1960: 142), Diller (1962), Baslez (1984: 89). For further discussion see chapter one.
 - 17 ‘In a small number of epithets attached to certain ethnic groups, then, it looks as though the seed of later systematic ethnological science was germinating’ (Hall 1989: 41). This ‘minimalist’ interpretation is neither entirely convincing nor satisfactory, however.
 - 18 Hall (1989: 3–55).
 - 19 Said (1978: 56–7). Yet cf. Hall (1989: 73) on Phrynicus’ *Phoenissae*.
 - 20 Cf. Luce (1997), Shumate (2006: 81ff.). Cf. the review of Dewald (1990). For a different view, see Ivantchik (2011). See also Vlassopoulos, this volume.
 - 21 Widely referred to as ‘anthropologie historique’. In the years that followed, structural analysis was enthusiastically applied to a wide variety of textual and iconographic evidence before finally making its way into the Anglo-American academy. See, for example, Gernet (1981 [1976]); Vidal-Naquet (1998 [1981]; 1996 [1970]); Bérard (1989 [1984]); Lissarrague (1990 [1987]).
 - 22 See Hall (1989: 165–90, 201–10), J. Hall (1997), Malkin (2001). Cf. Walbank (1951). See Vlassopoulos, this volume.
 - 23 The role allocated to Hall within this debate is somewhat unfair, however, insofar as the arguments tabled in the final chapter of *Inventing the Barbarian* were largely discounted or otherwise ignored.
 - 24 Mitchell (2007); Kim (2009) and chapter one, this volume.
 - 25 Isaac (2004; 2006), but see Tuplin (2007).
 - 26 Miller (1997: 135–258), who includes modes of imitation, adoption, adaptation, derivation and even appropriation (esp. 135–52).
 - 27 Gruen (2011). For further comment, see Kim in chapter one, this volume, no. 5.
 - 28 Harrison (2000).
 - 29 The complexities surrounding Lévi-Strauss’ encounter with the Classics are thus brilliantly highlighted: ‘It is this paradox of both a fundamental denial of philological methodology and the simultaneous reassertion of the importance of language which is one of the most interesting aspects of Lévi-Strauss’ essay ... the particular attention to the linguistic in his reading of mythology has meant that his structuralist account of ancient culture has paradoxically lent itself to the analysis of the literary expressions of its ideologies’ (Leonard 2005: 58).
 - 30 Cf. Pucci (1971), Burkert (1979), Conte (1986).
 - 31 See Marcus (1986). Cf. Clair (2003).
 - 32 Woolf (2009; 2011).
 - 33 Woolf (2011). See also Dench (1995: 22; 2005: 69–80).

- 34 For discussion, see Dench (1995: 175–6, 193). Whilst quick to dismiss fantastical accounts of semi-mythical beings inhabiting the world's margins as ethnographic fabulae, archaeologists and historians have frequently relied on the accounts of ancient ethnographers to flesh out their knowledge of the ethnonyms, social behaviour and territorial boundaries of the various non-literary societies whose material remains they set out to describe – it being widely assumed that they provided accurate and reliable testimony. See Dench (1995), Wells (2001: 14).
- 35 Aramayor (1978), Hall (1989: 75, 133), Bernand (1985), Georges (1994: 1–12).
- 36 For further discussion see Vlassopoulos in chapter two of this volume. For discussion of 'ethnography in practice' and both the use and application of ethnographic knowledge, see Dench (2005: 69–80).
- 37 Cf. Müller (1972–80), Hall (1989: 40–7), Jacob (1991).
- 38 Hall (1989: 41).
- 39 For an example for the downplay of other aspects, see the *BMCR* review of Hall (1996), ad Aesch. *Persae*, vv. 124, 187, 218–19 by Bakewell (1997).
- 40 Cf. Strabo, 14.2.28. The bibliography on this is extensive, beginning with Thuc. 1.3; see Hall (1989); Mackie (1996); Almagor (2000; 2005); Ross (2005), Kim, this volume for discussion. Cf. Vannicelli (1989); Hall (2002) on Homeric usage of 'Hellenes'. The earliest use otherwise being Heraclitus 22 B 107 DK on 'barbarian souls'. See Kirk, Raven and Shofield (1983: 188n. 2), Barnes (1982: 147–9), Kahn (1979: 35, 106–7).
- 41 Mackie (1996); Mitchell (2007). See Vos (1963), Ivanchik (2005). Cf. Hall (1989: 85–6, 139).
- 42 Cf. Hall (1989); Mackie (1996); Mitchell (2007); Kim, chapter one.
- 43 Cf. Stanley (1993), Loudon (2006). Cf. Wolff (1987).
- 44 Hall (1989: 6–13, 17, 23, 41, 47–8). For further discussion see chapter one.
- 45 Mackie (1996: 5). The language used by the Homeric Achaeans is described as public and political, showing a marked preference for aggressive blaming as opposed to the more private, poetic, introspective and praise-orientated approach favoured by the Trojans. See Mackie (1996: 161 and *passim*).
- 46 Hartog (1988: 161, 164, 170, 181, 315).
- 47 Although it is admitted, somewhat ruefully, that Odysseus is 'not even particularly curious about the world', expressing only occasional interest in seeing Polyphemos and hearing the Siren's song, it is nonetheless asserted that 'in Greece it all began with epic' (Hartog 2001: 9, 15–16; cf. *Il.* 9 229; 12 192; 10 472).
- 48 Cf. Page (1964: 131–2) on Homeric allusions in Archilochus F. 3 Diehl/ Bergk. Cf. Hall (1989: 47–50).
- 49 A term very much in vogue but whose definition seems to be entirely subjective; cf. Malkin (1998).
- 50 Dougherty (2001: 77). Dougherty's ethnographic imagination functions primarily on an abstract, quasi-theoretical level: 'the product of a culture ... that was trying to construct a reading of the worlds and peoples of its own mythic past in order to make sense of a tumultuous and volatile present' (Dougherty 2001: 9).
- 51 Dougherty (2001: 10). Both these and the arguments of Irad Malkin (discussed below) stand in marked contrast to the approach followed by Edith Hall in attempting to minimize both the impact and importance of ethnography prior to the fifth century BC. Whether they can in turn be extended in a manner that links broader notions of an ethnographic discourse with the ongoing power play through which ideas of culture, history and identity were routinely contested remains to be seen.
- 52 A notable characteristic of 'Nostos genealogical ethnography' as identified by Malkin

- is that it was normally applied to peoples living at one remove from those with whom Greek traders and colonists habitually came into contact. See Malkin (1998).
- 53 *Theogony* 1011–18; Malkin (1998: 160). Malkin argues that these mythic articulations functioned as a means of collective representation, adopted in some cases by the native populations themselves. However, the *Nostoi* – and by extension the writings tracing them – were not merely cultural representations but representations with a tangible impact upon Greek–non-Greek relations: the myths played an active role ‘in filtering, shaping and mediating cultural and ethnic encounters’ (Malkin 1998: 5). Cf. Erskine (2005); Dench (1995: 36–7). For detailed discussion of ethnographic traditions relating to the Central Apennines including the role of Greek mythological genealogies, see Dench (1995: ch. 5).
- 54 Malkin (1998: 179). Allowance should be made for the fact that the Homeric texts as we have them reflect many layers of the sixth and fifth centuries and later themes and concerns.
- 55 Hall (1989: 41). For the argument that broad similarities in approach and chosen subject matter amongst early prose authors writing on Egypt may be linked to the pedagogic role of Homeric epic, see Lloyd (1975: 123, 140).
- 56 For discussion, see Skinner (2012: 115–21). See also Wolcott (1999: 56) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983; 2007: 28, 165).
- 57 Discourse of identity in poetry: cf. Thomas (1982), Dougherty (2001), Hunter (2005: 3, 276–7). On performance, see Calame (1999).
- 58 Raaflaub and Talbert (2009); Kim (2009).
- 59 For the classic rebuttal of this thesis, see Hartog (1988).
- 60 Rosaria Munson, for example, has cast the Halicarnassian as part-moralist and part-political theorist, projecting intrinsically Greek concerns onto far-off lands and peoples so that ethnographic and historical *Logoi* essentially mirror each other when it comes to the problematics they address (Munson 2001: 13). Among Herodotus’ ethnographic *Logoi* cf. 1.65–8, 93–4, 95–107, 131–40, 171–3, 178–87, 192–200, 201–3, 215–16; 2.2–182 (esp. 35–98); 3.20, 3.38, 3.98–101, 107–13; 4.107–13, 4.5–82, 94–6, 103–17; 5.3–10, 16; 7.60–99. See Bichler (2004). The credit should also be shared with Hellenicus of Lesbos (Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 10.3.16).
- 61 As Jacob (1991: 159) claims, ‘L’ethnographie est en effet au coeur de son projet’. Cf. Müller (1972: 107). Previously, this aspect was generally neglected in scholarly treatments of Strabo and his work. It is absent from Trüdinger (1918) and Jüthner (1923). Cf. Van Passen (1957: 3–4). See Van der Vliet (1977; 1984).
- 62 Iberia (book 3), Gaul and Britain (book 4), Italy and Sicily (books 5–6), Germans, Scythians, Thrace and the surrounding area (book 7), Greece (books 8–10), Asia Minor (books 11–14), India and Persia (book 15), Syria and Arabia (book 16), and Egypt, Ethiopia and Lybia (book 17). See Aly (1968: 9–100), Jacob (1991: 147–8).
- 63 Two of the ethnographic *topoi* Strabo mentions that have become typical of the genre are clothing and armour or fighting habits, e.g. the trousers (ἀναξυρίδες) of the Celts (4.4.3), the cloaks called ‘saga’ (σάγα) of the Lusitanian men (3.3.7) or alternatively the helmets of the Roxolani which, together with their corselets, are described as being made of raw ox-hides to be used in conjunction with wicker shields, spears, bows and swords (7.3.17). In Strabo’s opinion the Roxolani’s failure reflects the fact that light-armed peoples are incapable of defeating a well-ordered and well-armed phalanx (7.3.17).
- 64 Cf. a similar group adorning an Etrusco-Campanian urn from Capua, c. 510–490 BC, GR1856. 12–26, 796 and 800; GR1964 12–21.1; GR1973.3–1.1. See Lubtchansky

- (2005: 95–9, figs. 18–24). On Etruscan identity, see Spivey (2007: 232), cf. Torelli (1996). For a terracotta antefix from Capua's Fondo Patturelli sanctuary depicting an Amazon/Scythian facing outwards, wearing a pointed cap, see Lubtchansky (2005: 108 fig. 34, with references) and Koch (1912, pl. X.1). Cf. Megaw and Megaw (1990) for Etruscan goods in a Scythian context.
- 65 See Dench (2007: 493) for the extent to which 'the ethnographic gaze' is predicated upon a certain level of knowledge being present amongst the target audience(s).
- 66 See Thomas (1992), Robb (1994), Woolf (1994) and the other essays in Bowman and Woolf (1994), and the essays in Yunis (2003) and Mackay (2008).
- 67 See Mitchell (2007); Kim (2009); Woolf (2011); Skinner (2012).
- 68 See the essays in Foxhall and Salmon (1998), Siapkak (2003), Vlassopoulos (2007), Skinner (2012).
- 69 Antiquity: see Helms (1998) and essays in Malkin (2001). Cf. Agar (1980), Clifford (1988), Coffey (1999), Comaroff and Comaroff (1992), Penny (2002). Cf. Jones (1997).
- 70 Dench (2007: 493).
- 71 Cf. Foxhall (2003), Malkin (2003b), Erskine (2005), Hall (2007).

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Part 1

Beginnings

The Invention of the ‘Barbarian’ in Late Sixth-Century BC Ionia

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The conception among the Greeks of a pan-Hellenic identity in opposition to the ‘barbarian’ has received a great deal of attention in Classical scholarship over the past two decades. This interest has also sparked a lively debate on the question of when exactly the concept of Greek–barbarian polarity or antithesis was actually formulated. Some have linked its invention to Athenian drama in the context of Athenian propaganda vis-à-vis members of the Delian League in the fifth century BC.¹ The fourth century BC is also considered a possible context for its conception.² Other views place it much earlier in the ninth century (as a consequence of the Ionian experience of settlement and conflict during the migration to the coasts of Asia Minor)³ or in the Archaic Period through the interaction between the panhellenic local elites (by inter-marriages and participation in the Olympic Games).⁴ However, it will henceforth be argued that the Greek–barbarian antithesis was first developed among the Ionians in the final decades of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth century BC.

Debate on the dating of the conception of the barbarian

In her ground-breaking book, Edith Hall argued that the radical Greek–barbarian antithesis only became firmly established in the middle of the fifth century BC and that its distinctive features were developed by the Athenians as part of their propaganda to rally and control the member states of the newly established Delian league, by directing their attention and hostility towards a recognizably different and dangerous ‘other’.⁵ Hall concludes that it was the Athenian tragedians, most notably Aeschylus, who developed the ‘rhetoric around the antithesis of Greek and Barbarian’⁶ and formulated a picture of the barbarian whose behaviour and conduct ‘were to be canonized as features of barbarian psychology’.⁷ More recently, however, another notable critic (Isaac) has argued that Greek ethnocentrism and the Greek–barbarian antithesis only became apparent in the last decades of the fifth century and should rather be treated as a fourth-century phenomenon.⁸ However, as Edith Hall rightly points out, all the

features of the barbarian that we would later attribute to this antithesis are already present in the lines of Aeschylus' *Persae*. Barbarian cruelty and despotism are clearly demonstrated in the *Persae* by Xerxes' threat to decapitate all his sea captains (*Pers.* 371). Their lack of guile and the triumph of Greek intelligence over their numerical superiority are exemplified by the success of the ruse involving the false message (lines 355–68). The barbarian is also characterized by fear: all the barbarians in the Persian host, for instance, are shaken by fear at the sound of the Greeks singing the paean (line 391). Furthermore, Aeschylus repetitively emphasizes the 'immoderate luxuriousness' and 'unrestrained emotionalism' of the barbarian which is contrasted with the austere and 'self-disciplined Greek character'.⁹

It is also notable that after the successful repulse of Xerxes' invasion, Greek democracy and barbarian tyranny are regarded by Aeschylus as one of the many distinguishing features of the Greek–barbarian divide.¹⁰ For instance, in the *Suppliant Women*, King Pelasgus is fearful of arriving at a final decision without the approval of the *demos* (*Suppl.* 369ff.). Voting and other features of Greek *eleutheria* (freedom) are emphatically stressed and contrasted with the despotic inclinations of the Egyptian Danaids who argue that the king is authority onto himself (170ff.). The Greek leader is always careful to act in accordance with the laws (390). The men of Egypt however use *bia*/force and outright violence in defiance of the laws of the gods (*hubris*, another attribute of the fictive barbarian) (863). In tragedy the rhetoric of the opposition between Greek democracy and barbarian tyranny obviously did matter, regardless of actual reality.

We can therefore be certain that the Greek–barbarian divide was well and truly established and accepted as a fact (at least by certain elements within Greek society) in the fifth century BC. However, Hall's argument that the Athenians of the period during and after Xerxes' invasion 'invented the Barbarian' can also be contested. It is no doubt true that it was the Attic writers of the middle and late fifth century BC who standardized and defined Greek–barbarian polarity for later generations. However, it will henceforth be argued that the Greek–barbarian antithesis appears first not after the war of 480–479 against Xerxes, but in the context of the Ionian resistance to the Persians in the dying years of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth century BC.¹¹

Before we enter the world of sixth-century Ionia, it must first be briefly stated that from the observation of available evidence, it is possible to infer that there was no systematic or ideologically charged image of the 'barbarian' before the late sixth century BC.¹² Despite the argument of Coleman¹³ that there is a definite ethnocentric element in the *Iliad*, that the Trojans and their allies are always presented by the poet as being militarily inferior to the Achaeans, the supposedly foreign Trojans in this Archaic epic are almost indistinguishable from their presumably Greek (Achaean) opponents.¹⁴ They are, for instance, both shown to worship the same gods, and the principal heroes on both sides, whether they be Lycians like Sarpedon and Glaucus or Achaeans such as Diomedes and Achilles, all abide by the same heroic code of conduct (the principles of which are expounded by Sarpedon, a Lycian, in *Iliad* 12.310–28). On the individual level, warriors on both sides show no qualms about forming personal alliances and renewing ties of guest friendship with the 'enemy', as exemplified in Book

6 of the *Iliad* where Glaucus and Diomedes, upon discovering that their respective forebears were linked by obligations of *xenia*, forego combat and exchange armour as a token of their friendship. Neither the Greek nor the Lycian deems the other to be in any way foreign and they encounter no language barriers when communicating.¹⁵

The boundaries between Greeks and non-Greeks at this stage were hazy at best. Distinctions did evidently exist, but they were not primarily between ethnic groups. Rather, the dividing line in texts such as the *Odyssey* in the seventh century BC¹⁶ was between the civilized Eastern Mediterranean world and the uncivilized hinterlands beyond it, between the distant and the near. As Vidal-Naquet and Jacob suggest, the poet of the *Odyssey* divides the world into tiers.¹⁷ At the upper level we find the noble and hospitable Phaeacians who are not far removed from the world of the miraculous and are closely associated with the gods and also the Ethiopians, the *eschatoi andron/* inhabitants of the extreme edges of the earth, who feast with the divine, most notably Poseidon (1.23). Below them are the *sitophagoi/cereal-eaters*, the civilized peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean who respect the laws of *xenia* and among whom proper relations between human beings are observed. In this group we find the Egyptians, at times the Phoenicians, and in most cases the Greeks themselves. At the very bottom of the hierarchy,¹⁸ if the use of the word is not too anachronistic in this context, are savages like the Cyclopes¹⁹ who observe no laws and whose cruelty and cannibalism place them closer to the realm of wild beasts.²⁰ The way of life of these 'savages' is diametrically opposed to the organized and regulated pattern of civilized living exemplified (in Greek eyes) in the Greek *poleis* and other Eastern Mediterranean state entities such as Egypt and the Phoenician cities.²¹

Thus, we can with some confidence assume that by the middle of the seventh century BC that the Greeks had to an extent developed a conceptual awareness of the Eastern Mediterranean world which mingled solid geographical knowledge with mythical beliefs and the supernatural. It also seems likely that during this age of intensive interaction and mixing with non-Greeks, that the Greeks developed a vague sense of ethnic identity, an awareness of belonging to a more broad, inter-tribal, inter-state community that amounted to what J. Hall calls 'aggregative' identity.²² However, even this aggregative identity seems to have attained concrete form relatively late in the Archaic period (sixth century), since the names *Hellas*, formally merely a geographical term denoting a small area in central Greece,²³ and *Hellenes* were only gradually adopted as a common appellation by the majority of the Greeks.²⁴ As Alty explains, even during the Classical period, loyalty to one's own *polis* and tribal, regional or even sub-ethnic (Dorian, Ionian, etc.)²⁵ affiliations often mattered more than any abstract notion of Hellenicity.²⁶

Thus Hellenic ethnic identity took longer to crystallize than is commonly assumed, and we can infer further that the Greek-barbarian antithesis took even longer to be firmly established in the minds of everyday Greeks (if indeed it ever was). When we consider the representation of the Egyptians and the Phoenicians in the Homeric epics, the way the rulers of both Egypt and Sidon are shown to be no different from an Achaean prince in respecting the laws of *xenia* and the heroic code (e.g. in the case of the king of Egypt accepting the supplication of Odysseus in battle: 14.257ff.), it becomes clear that the Greeks in the Archaic Period perceived themselves as forming

a part of the larger civilized world of the Eastern Mediterranean,²⁷ rather than as a specific entity set apart from the rest of the world. This representation also concurs with the actual, historical reality of the time, when the Aegean constituted merely a peripheral sector of the greater Eastern Mediterranean world, a recipient of Near Eastern and Egyptian influence, not the exporter of civilization that it would claim to be in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods.²⁸

This Archaic Greek admiration for the 'foreign' Near East was also accompanied by the substantial presence of real foreigners within Greek cities, especially in the eastern Greek (Ionian, Aeolian) cities of Asia Minor which gave birth to the Homeric epic tradition. Literary²⁹ and epigraphic evidence from cities such as Smyrna, Ephesus, Halicarnassus and Klazomenae from the eighth to the sixth century BC attest to the use of Lydian, Phrygian and Carian alongside Greek in many of these eastern 'Greek' cities, indicative of the presence of a multilingual and very likely multi-ethnic population.³⁰ Greeks also resided in the Near East in ever growing numbers during the Archaic Period. The lyric poet Alcaeus tells us that his brother, Antimenidas, served under the Babylonians in Ascalon (c. 604 BC), as part of the Greek mercenary wave to the Near East, a process which began as early as the eighth century BC.³¹ Babylonian cuneiform documents from the same period also record that craftsmen from Ionia and western Anatolia were present at the court of Nebuchadnezzar II.³² As perhaps a reminder of the degree of Greek integration into the Near Eastern world, we also discover in the inscriptions of King Sargon of Assyria that upon his capture of Ashdod in the Levant in 712 BC, he had expelled a man of Yavan (Ionian) who had established himself as tyrant of that city.³³ Under such circumstances it was extremely difficult for artificial, impermeable and rigid linguistic or ethnic barriers to emerge.

Lastly, the fact that in 734 BC an altar to Apollo Archegetes was said to have been set up in Sicilian Naxos to be used in common by all Greek colonists³⁴ setting off to mainland Greece does not prove that there existed a proto-pan-Hellenism in the eighth century, a forerunner of the 'oppositional' articulation of Greek ethnicity in the fifth century.³⁵ We have no way of knowing whether the altar, which obviously did function as a pan-Sicilian Greek symbol in the late fifth century when Thucydides mentions it (6.3.1), functioned in the same capacity in the late eighth century BC. It could more plausibly be argued that its pan-Sicilian significance was to some extent engineered as part of the early fifth-century BC Deinomenid effort to bolster the notion of a Siceliot identity under their tyranny that would transcend traditional ethnic divisions between Ionians and Dorians. Even if the altar was set up during the Archaic Period, its function, like that of the Hellenion in Egypt, is more likely to have been aggregative along the lines suggested by J. Hall, rather than oppositional.

The term *barbaros*

This then brings us to the concept of *barbaros*. If there was no ideology of antithetical othering in Archaic Greece before the sixth century BC, then why, when and how did this term and its usage become so widespread among Greeks? The term *barbaros* is first attested in the *Iliad* (c. 650 BC)³⁶ in the Catalogues section of Book 2 where the

Carians are referred to as *barbarophonon* (*Iliad* 2.867).³⁷ However, the existence of this term so early in Greek literature is highly suspect, since Thucydides later in the fifth century argued that Homer did not mention the word *barbaros* at all (1.3.3).³⁸ Was Thucydides using a defective version of Homer or did he simply not do his homework properly? That's highly unlikely and Thucydides' assertion should be taken more seriously, especially when we consider the fact that this early attestation occurs in the Catalogues section of Book 2, which famously was all too vulnerable to later interpolations, for example the distortion of the number of Athenian ships to favour the Athenians (presumably during the late sixth century).

There is no way to definitively prove or disprove when or if the interpolation happened. Several important factors relating to this entry on the Carians, however, suggest very strongly that this is indeed a post-fifth-century interpolation. The term *barbarophonon* is a *hapax legomenon* and nowhere else in the Catalogues does the poet ever mention the linguistic particularity of any ethnic group. This makes the epithet highly suspect. The fact that the Carians alone are singled out for such treatment is also very significant, since this in all likelihood suggests knowledge of fifth-century traditions making the Carians among the earliest non-Greek (i.e. barbarian according to Classical understanding) speakers encountered by the Greeks (e.g. the story told in Thucydides 1.4 concerning the expulsion of the Carians from the Cyclades by Greeks under Minos). From the point of view of a post-fifth-century Greek, the Carians were thus the ideal representatives of the 'barbarian' *genos* in the time frame attributed to the action of the *Iliad*. The interpolation could also have been triggered by the fifth-century Ionian preoccupation with their ethnic purity³⁹ (reflected in the foundation stories involving Greeks killing or expelling non-Greek Carians in Asia Minor⁴⁰ instead of coexisting with them as our archaeological evidence shows). This would explain why the Archaic Carians in the *Iliad* are 'othered' with the Classical notion of *barbaros*.⁴¹

The interpolation is made all the more likely when we consider the fact that other than this highly disputable attestation there is no other example in all of Archaic Greek literature before the late sixth century of the use of the term *barbaros*. We find rather neutral references to foreign speech such as *allothroos* or *alloglossoi*⁴² in the *Odyssey* (1.183; 3.302; 14.43; 15.453). We also find in the *Odyssey* the term *agriophonos* with a clearly negative connotation to describe the Sintians (8.294), but never *barbaros*. In fact the use of the word *barbaros* is extremely rare even in late sixth-century Archaic Greek literature. It is only attested three times in total: Anacreon (fr. 423), Hecataeus (fr. 119) and Heraclitus (fr. 107). As a noun appellation, it is first found, later than we would expect, in Hecataeus, in which it carries no visible negative connotations.⁴³

Since the time of Strabo (14.2.28) many have taken for granted that the word *barbaros* in Greek literature was originally associated with the inability to speak Greek, that is, defective speech,⁴⁴ which marked the foreigner off as inferior. From this assumption, Diller argued in the 1960s that language and the comprehension of *logos* (i.e. Greek) was central to the Greek–barbarian divide.⁴⁵ It is indeed true that in the Archaic Period the Greeks recognized the existence of foreigners speaking incomprehensible tongues (e.g. the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 5.113–14 where Trojan and Phrygian are cited as different languages). However, before the late sixth century

there is no evidence whatsoever that speaking Greek was regarded by Greeks as a mark of superiority over non-Greeks. Bad feeling and prejudice towards foreigners no doubt existed among the Greeks in the early Archaic Period, as one would naturally expect, but this by no means implied the antithetical 'othering' of all foreigners based on speech patterns.⁴⁶ In other words there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the negative connotations implicit in the word *barbaros* necessarily derive from the foreigner's inability to speak Greek.

It will be argued shortly that the word *barbaros* is likely to have possessed multiple meanings in Greek, of which inability to speak Greek was merely one among many, but for now we should first examine the use of the word *barbaros* in sixth-century Ionia. The lyric poet Anacreon (late sixth century) states with a recognizably contemptuous tone: 'κοίμισον δέ, Ζεῦ, σόλοικον φθόγγον μή πως βάρβαρα βάξις /and lay to rest, O Zeus, that foreign sound, in case you [?] talk barbarian-style' (fr. S 313 Page SLG, trans. M. West).⁴⁷ Moreover, in a well-known fragment, the Presocratic philosopher Heraclitus somewhat brusquely declares that 'κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὠτα βαρβάρους ψυχᾶς ἐχόντων/poor witnesses for men are their eyes and ears, if they have barbarian souls' (DK fr. 107). Now the word *barbaros* used in these fragments may not necessarily imply the existence of a hostile barbarian *genos* as opposed to a Hellenic one, but given that both the poet and the philosopher were active in the last third of the sixth century BC, the period of unrelenting Persian aggression in western Asia Minor,⁴⁸ coming across these comments one cannot help but sense that there is more to these remarks than mere rhetoric. All the more so because the term *barbaros* is suddenly used with ever growing frequency from this time onwards, usually to designate either the Persians or Persian-controlled subjects in Asia.

It is indeed worth noting that in the *Persae* Asia and non-Greeks/*barbaroi* in general (i.e. those who live on the continent ruled by the Persians) are equated. In line 12, somewhat remarkably, Aeschylus refers to the Asiatic race (Ἀσιατογενῆς) and manages to fit a plethora of ethnic groups as diverse and different as the Lydians, Persians, Babylonians and even Egyptians into this race reared in the land of Asia (line 61, χθὼν Ἀσιῇτις). Xerxes is called the ruler of Asia (line 74), and the Greek land (line 186, Ἑλλάδα) is seen as being distinct from that of the Asians/βάρβαρον (line 187). In line 255, again the Persian army is called the army of the barbarians and in line 337 the fleet at Salamis is also referred to as that of the βάρβαρον in juxtaposition with the Ἑλλησιν (line 338). Further into the play the Persian queen equates the Persians with the βάρβαρον (lines 472–5) and in line 635 the Persian language is called βάρβαρα. Ethnic and linguistic differentiation thus becomes rhetorically submerged in the antithetical division between *hellas/hellenes* and *asia/barbaroi*, and the geographical *locus* of the barbarian is firmly fixed in Asia (Persian Empire). Furthermore, in Aeschylus, linguistic difference is not the only meaning implicit in the word *barbaros* nor is it the most prominent meaning overall. It is primarily a designation for the Persians and their Asian subjects invading Greece to deprive Hellas of its political freedom.

Persians, pan-Ionianism and the creation of the barbarian

What is remarkable in all this is the fact that shortly after the Persian Wars in the *Persae* we already have a fully developed image of the barbarian with the full paraphernalia of stereotypes rather than a haphazard one in the process of gradual evolution. This strongly suggests that the origins of this imagery of the barbarian must be earlier than the Attic tragedians whom Edith Hall sees as having initiated this rhetoric. Equally noteworthy is the prevalence of the language of pan-Ionianism in the text. In line 178 the Queen mother refers to Greece as the land of the Ionians, an indication no doubt of the Greek awareness of the Persian habit of calling all Greeks Ionians,⁴⁹ but also of the strong Ionian flavour of the pan-Greek identity as it is presented in Aeschylus. The chorus refers to Darius' mastery over the Greeks of the Ionian domain (lines 898–1000) in its praise of the former king and then contrasts this with Xerxes' defeat at the hands of Ionian sailors (line 1011). These revealing remarks are then followed by the emphatic reminder that the Ionians are not cowards (line 1025).⁵⁰ Thus what is really a pan-Hellenic Greek victory over the Persians (which would later be painted as solely an Athenian triumph) is presented in the *Persae* as the victory of the Ionians in the framework of pan-Ionianism.⁵¹ It is the assertion of this chapter that this pan-Ionianism in fact provided the rhetorical and ideological precedent for the 'othering' of the barbarian that was later inherited, rather than invented, by the Athenians.

Pan-Ionianism was itself the product of the eastern Greeks' encounter with the Persians. There was a sudden outburst of intellectual curiosity about the actual physical geography of the world in the middle of the sixth century in Ionia. This in turn led to the appearance of the first cartographer of the Aegean world, Anaximander of Miletus, whose symmetrical map of the known world centred on Delphi⁵² or Delos⁵³ represented the first attempt among Greeks to move away from the mythical 'geography' of the Homeric world. This interest in real geography, surprisingly enough, also coincided with Lydian and later Persian aggression against the city states of Ionia. The rule of Lydia, governed as it was by philhellenic kings,⁵⁴ was less alien than the later onslaught of the Persians who under Harpagus the Mede systematically conquered Ionia and perhaps established tyrannies in certain Greek *poleis*.⁵⁵ This conquest also seriously threatened the Aegean and Anatolian-centred world-view of the Ionians, already manifest in Anaximander's first map of the world, which may have placed this western region at its centre.⁵⁶

The radical 'othering' and more overt hostility towards the Persians, rather than the previous, more familiar Lydian aggressors,⁵⁷ may well reflect the Greek trepidation at encountering an *ethnos* quite alien to the Eastern Mediterranean world. The Persians and their Iranian subjects, unlike the peoples of the Near East with whom the Greeks were in frequent contact and arguably shared a common ecumenical culture, must have shocked the Greeks with their strange customs, their habit of wearing leather trousers (an ethnographic marker of the Iranians in Herodotus, 1.71, and evidently noted as a differentiating feature of the 'Medes' by the Greeks) and their armies consisting mainly of cavalry employing steppe tactics in war (mounted archers in vivid contrast to the preponderance of infantry and spearmen – who were sometimes

mounted – in Near Eastern and Aegean warfare), which included genuine nomadic⁵⁸ elements.⁵⁹

It is also plausible to speculate that it was this ‘shocking’ encounter with the odd and more alien Persians⁶⁰ and the Greek experience of complex Persian imperial practices that stimulated the first beginnings of ‘Greek’ ethnography or ethnic categorization, the emphatic stress on differences and divisions between ethnic groups.⁶¹ I call to attention the administrative reforms brought to completion by Darius in the early stages of his reign, some 20 years before the outbreak of the Ionian revolt, which involved the division of the empire into satrapies⁶² and the imposition of set amounts of tribute or taxes⁶³ on each province and locality of the Persian Empire. To govern, organize and tax newly conquered territories and to plan new conquests Darius and perhaps also his predecessors (Cyrus and Cambyses) evidently needed reliable information that we would now call geographical and ethnographic.

Royal foundation documents (from Susa), imperial Achaemenid inscriptions, palace friezes depicting tribute bearers at Persepolis,⁶⁴ the Persepolis treasury and fortification tablets,⁶⁵ and Egyptian evidence such as the Suez Canal stelae and the statue of Darius at the entrance of the great gate in Susa (carved in Egypt) that provide information on the subject peoples of the empire,⁶⁶ indeed convey information concerning the wealth, geography and ethnic composition of each province or region of the empire. The reliefs at Persepolis depict various ethnic groups bringing in their particular items of tribute, usually in the form of exotic animals and products for the amusement of the king and his court. The Cappadocians bring horses and cloaks; the Cilicians bring vessels, hides, clothing and rams; the Elamites bring lions; the Indians bring donkeys and baskets; the Egyptians bring bulls and fabric; the Bactrians bring camels; and the Ethiopians bring elephant tusks. The Persepolis fortification tablets even mention 12 species of poultry from different parts of the empire.⁶⁷ The information on the ethnic composition of conquered regions⁶⁸ (each ethnic group associated with a particular region and called a *dahyu* in Old Persian)⁶⁹ received special attention from the Persian kings, as it facilitated the systematic categorization of subject peoples for the purpose of exploitation of manpower and material resources. This was duly noticed by Herodotus, who provides his own list of Persian provinces and information on taxes imposed on each ethnic group and satrapy (3.89ff). In particular, the stairway of the Apadana at Persepolis presents a veritable ‘ethnographic museum’,⁷⁰ with its depiction of all the characteristic traits of clothing and facial features of the various tribes and peoples of the empire.⁷¹ The Persians also carefully noted the religious sensibilities of particular groups of people such as the Jews⁷² and the Babylonians⁷³ in order to elicit their support and obedience.

Surprisingly enough, such information also constitutes the bulk of what we now call Greek ethnography: curiosities, wealth of different regions and peoples, customs, religious beliefs, manpower, all features of the information collected by the Persian king for the purposes of administration, government and conquest. The Greek participation in this imperial endeavour of classification and inquiry must also be noted. In Herodotus we learn that Scylax of Caryanda (a Carian who wrote in Greek) was placed in charge of the exploration of the Red Sea and India (4.44). The information he gathered (evidently geographic and ethnographic) was then used by Darius to conquer

the Indians. In Babylonia we learn from documents like the one from Borsippa (dated to 515 BC) that Carians and Greeks resided in substantial numbers in Babylonia even before the time of the Ionian revolt. The aftermath of this revolt saw the forced deportation of the Milesians and Eretrians (the latter in the subsequent punitive campaign under Datis and Artaphernes).⁷⁴ Documentary records from Persepolis also show that there were Greeks during the reign of Darius working in a secretarial capacity under the Persians.⁷⁵ The Persepolis fortification tablets mention Ionian mothers in that city. Nine bore boys and received 2 quarts of grain each, while 14 bore girls and were given 1 quart each (PF 1224). Whole families from Ionia were thus resident in the easternmost capital of the empire. Further west they are found in Susa working on the royal palace there (DSf 29 and 42).⁷⁶

The clear-cut divisions of satrapies and ethnic groups and the identification of their distinctive features and peculiarities in the Persian administrative system⁷⁷ were thus well known to the eastern Greeks. This knowledge may well have been utilized by those who had contributed to that system and its methods of classification, and later may have found its way into the works of the ethnographers.⁷⁸ Interest in geography and the origins of the various *ethne* of the known world was not confined to Ionians such as Anaximander and Hecataeus, but also attracted the attention of roughly contemporaneous or early Jewish genealogists who argued for the common origin of mankind (Genesis 10) and even earlier Babylonian geographers who also produced their own world map (c. 600 BC)⁷⁹ depicting the inhabited earth surrounded by *murratu/ocean*⁸⁰ (which of course strikes us as being almost identical with the geographical concept found in Anaximander's map of the inhabited world that may well be, as Horowitz suggests, an adaptation of Babylonian antecedents⁸¹). The emergence of ethnographic and geographic works in the Aegean at a slightly later time in history hardly seems like a coincidence. On the contrary, this supports the view that the Aegean, as part of the wider Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean world, participated in the intellectual trends of that world under the influence of Persian 'ethnographic' endeavours. Thus the imposition of boundaries and the focus on ethnic specificity and distinctions, largely for administrative purposes, in the Persian system is likely to have triggered the Greek interest in their own ethnic identity and also the identities of others.⁸²

The Persian practice of categorising all Greeks as a relatively homogeneous group, especially in their art, is also noteworthy. In Persian imperial inscriptions and iconography all Greeks are called collectively Yawan or Yauna. In fact, as Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg points out, viewed from the centre of the empire, the Greeks, who constituted the westernmost subjects of the Great King, were to Persians hardly distinguishable from other western peoples such as the Spardiya (Lydians) and the Karka (Carians).⁸³ All these peoples including the Greeks are shown wearing basically the same clothing and, physically speaking, there is nothing to mark them out as being different from one another, despite the fact that the 'sculptors ... took care to portray various peoples and nations with distinguishing features: clothes, weaponry, jewellery, hairdress, shoes, and leg coverings, as well as facial traits'.⁸⁴ The Ionians were evidently not distinctive enough to serve as the significant boundary marker in the north-west for the Persians. The Persians identified Kush, Sardis, India and Scythians beyond

Sogdiana as the outer fringes of their vast empire. Greeks were simply incorporated into Sardis.⁸⁵

It is also interesting to observe that the Persians were evidently aware of the internal political divisions among the Greeks. Of all the ethnic groups depicted on the friezes of Darius, only the Greeks and the Saka (Scythians) are treated occasionally as constituting two or three separate groups. The Greeks are sometimes referred to as 'those on the mainland' or 'those in/on the Sea' (i.e. of the islands),⁸⁶ or 'those beyond the sea' (evidently the Greeks in Europe conquered or claimed by Darius) (DPe).⁸⁷ In other words the Persians were willing to recognize geographical distinctions among the Greeks, but chose to represent them as being homogeneous in their visual representations. Regardless of any putative or real differences among the Greeks that the various Greek *ethne* or sub-*ethne* (Dorians, Ionians, Aeolians, etc.) recognized as being significant, the Persians simply chose to ignore any differentiating features and referred to them all as Yauna.

The Greeks, as seen earlier in the *Persae*, were clearly aware of this Persian practice. I would suggest that the Ionians over time took over this Persian/Near Eastern attitude for their own use, only this time as a means of forging a united Greek resistance against the Great King. The Greeks had developed a sense of 'aggregative' identity by the middle of the sixth century. The founding of a common sanctuary, the Hellenion, for all Greeks at Naucratis in Egypt around 570 BC⁸⁸ could be taken as evidence of the fact that the Greeks by that stage were slowly moving towards a more definite sense of common Hellenic identity. It is quite possible that shortly afterwards, via their contacts with and experiences under the Persians, the Ionians finally crystallized the notion of the existence of a single, distinct Hellenic *genos* as opposed to a bewildering plurality of separate sub-*ethne*. However, we are still left with the baffling phenomenon of all foreigners being lumped together as a single 'barbarian' *genos* in Classical Greek literature. It is perhaps not so difficult to delude oneself into believing that one's own *ethnos* is unique, but it is a different matter altogether to argue that there exists another monolithic entity that includes all other peoples who supposedly fit the same stereotypes. How could this belief have become so widely accepted, especially in the context of ethnographic data on various different ethnic groups being actively noted and recorded? And why was it that for this blanket reference to foreigners the obscure, non-Greek derived word *barbaros* was employed instead of *alloglossoi* which in the *Odyssey* and in the graffiti at Abu Simbel⁸⁹ seems to have been used as the common Greek word designating foreigners speaking foreign languages?

Old Persian may provide us with possible answers. In Old Persian there was a term *barabara*, literally 'he who carries a burden/load'. This term still survives in New Persian as *barbar*, 'carrier, porter'.⁹⁰ The word *bara* from *bar* (Old Persian, 'to carry'), which is etymologically linked to the Old Indian Sanskrit term *bhara*,⁹¹ could also mean tax.⁹² Thus *barabara* or *barbara* could mean either the carrier/bearer of a burden or tax, that is, a taxpayer.⁹³ I would suggest tentatively that this term, rather than the Sumerian derivation suggested by Edith Hall,⁹⁴ was possibly the prototype of the Greek term *barbaros*, that is, that the Classical Greek word *barbaros* perhaps did not mean solely speakers of an alien tongue, but those who were subject to the Persians and had become taxpayers to the Persian throne.⁹⁵ This hypothesis is strengthened by

the fact that the word *barbaros* only starts to be used in the late sixth century BC in Ionia and then later throughout Greece in the context of the Greek struggle against the Persians, primarily as a designation for Persians (or rather the 'Medes') and their subjects in Asia, as shown earlier. This explains why the word *barbaros* was used instead of *alloglossoi* to designate foreigners, because it was a term that encapsulated a variety of meanings (such as subservience, Medizing and being a Persian subject) for the Greeks in addition to the notion of speaking a foreign, incomprehensible language.

The Sumerian-Akkadian derivation vouched for by Edith Hall cannot be ruled out entirely, but there are strong grounds for viewing such a borrowing as somewhat unlikely. The hypothesis that the Greeks might have taken over an ancient Sumerian or Akkadian term was raised at the beginning of the twentieth century by Weidner, who argued that the Sumerian word *bar* which means 'outside', 'exterior', 'outskirts' as a noun and possibly, though this lacks documentary evidence, 'foreign' as an adjective, and can be reduplicated into *barbar*, which he claimed could mean 'foreigner'.⁹⁶ The problem with this idea is that all the documented examples of the word *barbar* in Sumerian do not have the meaning 'foreigner', but refer to 'a part of a weaver's loom'.⁹⁷ Weidner went on to argue that this hypothetical Sumerian word *barbar*, supposedly meaning foreigner, was taken over by Akkadian scribes and rendered *barbaru*, meaning 'foreigner', and then somehow passed into Archaic Greek.⁹⁸ Again there are problems with this assertion. The Akkadian word *barbaru* means wolf or jackal,⁹⁹ not foreigner. *Barbaru* could possibly derive in some way from the Sumerian *urbarra*,¹⁰⁰ which is a compound word formed from *ur-*, 'dog' or 'wolf', and *bar-*, 'outside', meaning literally an 'outside dog' or 'wild dog', that is, a wolf. However, whether the reduplication of *bar* here is from the Sumerian *bar* is uncertain.

Did this Akkadian word for wolf somehow pass into Greek? It is not completely impossible, but then we are left with the perplexing question of why, if Weidner is correct, the Greeks would have chosen to borrow a stylized Sumerian derived word rather than the general Semitic word for 'wolf': *zibu* (Akkadian) from protosemitic *dib* or *zib*, which is also found in western semitic languages to which Greek was in close proximity?¹⁰¹ Furthermore, how can we explain the fact that the word *barbaros* does not have any meaning that approximates to 'dog' or 'wolf' in Greek and that it does not appear in Archaic Greek literature until the Persian period? Did the Greeks pick up this word and then apply it to all foreigners because their languages sounded like dogs barking? Or did they use it as an insult, likening foreigners to dogs?¹⁰² But then why didn't they use the Greek word for dog instead of this foreign word of obscure origin? These are only remote possibilities and it must be said they are more speculative than conclusive. In contrast, the Old Persian derivation provides a logical explanation as to why the people whom our Greek sources in the early and mid-fifth century call barbarians are overwhelmingly the residents of the Middle East, that is, those conquered by the Persians. It also explains how the Greeks were able to categorise people as different from one another, as the Egyptians and the Indians as a single entity. They were all taxpayers/subjects, that is, in Greek ideology, slaves (the Persian word *barabara* was after all indicative of subservience) of the Persian autocrat invading Hellas to deprive it of its political freedom. The strong emphasis on political differentiation (i.e. tyranny vs freedom and political liberty of the Greeks in contrast

to the slavery of the barbarian), which even more than language differentiation is central to the Greek representation of the *barbaroi* and the use of the word *barbaros* in Classical literature, supports this line of reasoning.

It is indeed in this context that one should perhaps also interpret the anti-barbarian fragments of Heraclitus and Anacreon mentioned at the beginning of this section. It is no accident then that the first references to barbarians occur in sixth-century Ionia, when for the first time the Greeks were exposed to the prospect of becoming *barbaroi*/taxpayers.¹⁰³ Perhaps revealingly, the Greek word for tribute, *phoros*, that is, taxes that were paid by the Ionians to the Persians and then later to the Athenians, has the same root meaning as the Persian word *bara*, 'to bear' or 'carry' a load. The hostility towards *barbaroi* was then not initially directed towards an ethnic entity, but the idea of becoming taxpayer/subjects of the alien, Persian king. This term would then quickly become equated with foreign speech, since all taxpayers to the Persian throne were or should be non-Greeks.

One might object that the attestations of the word *barbaros* in the sixth century refer to speech barriers and differences, not taxes and servitude. Of the three attestations of the word *barbaros*, the remarks of Anacreon about speaking in barbarian style indeed do seem to focus on speech and identify barbarian with speaking a foreign language. The fragment of Hecataeus, however, does not refer directly to differences in language, but highlights ethnic difference by identifying the original inhabitants of Greece (Peloponnese) as barbarian, that is, non-Greeks who had migrated to Greece from the East (e.g. Pelops, Danaus and Cadmus) and were associated with peoples who later became subjects of the Persian Empire.¹⁰⁴ The fragment of Heraclitus is rather ambiguous and could be referring to speech patterns or some form of moral or political defect identified with being *barbaros*, that is, conceivably the witness of someone with a 'barbarian' soul was worthless, not because he couldn't speak or understand Greek, but because he has sold out to the Persians and Medized.

As present we cannot say definitively either, as some have suggested, that *barbaros* is always associated with speech from the beginning or had other connotations embedded in its original meaning, as I have suggested. Our sources are simply too sparse and fragmentary to prove for certain the exact ways in which the word *barbaros* was used in the sixth century BC and how, if I am correct, the Persian word *barbara* was adopted and then reinterpreted in the specifically sixth-century Greek context. Nonetheless, as demonstrated thus far, historical developments and later usages of the word *barbaros* provide compelling clues as to how, when and why the word was adopted amongst the Ionian Greeks as a hostile pejorative designation for Persian subjects. It is highly conceivable that the pan-Ionianism of the Ionian city states of Asia Minor (probably itself the product of the Ionian reaction to Phrygian, Lydian and later Persian pressure)¹⁰⁵ was gradually modified to embrace a wider pan-Hellenic world.¹⁰⁶ Indeed we discover Themistocles later in 480 BC using the language of pan-Ionianism to appeal to the common 'Hellenicity' of mainland Greeks and Ionians (Hdt. 8.22),¹⁰⁷ though with little practical effect as the Ionians remain loyal to Xerxes. However, after the defeat of Salamis, the Samians appeal for aid to mainland Greeks on exactly these same grounds, stressing the common gods of the Greeks (Hdt. 9.90-2).

The radical Greek–barbarian opposition thus I would argue was not formulated by the Athenians as Edith Hall suggests, but most probably by the Ionians before the Persian Wars who first adopted the term *barbaros* and then, as exhibited in Aristagoras' request for aid from the Spartans during the Ionian revolt (Hdt. 5.49) and later in the Samian embassy mentioned above, appealed to the common 'Hellenicity' of the Ionians and Dorians against a new, homogeneous enemy, the barbarian, who now embraced the whole of Asia.¹⁰⁸

Notes

- 1 E. Hall (1989: 1–3).
- 2 Isaac (2004: 286).
- 3 Malkin (1998: 268).
- 4 J. Hall (1997; 2002).
- 5 E. Hall (1989: 2). Recently Gruen (2011: 20–1) has countered Hall's assertions with the argument that the dichotomy of Greeks and barbarians in Greek literature should not be overemphasized and that Aeschylus does not relegate the Persians to the category of the 'other' in the *Persae*. Gruen's argument that Aeschylus, Herodotus and Xenophon show marked signs of respect for the Persians and do not necessarily present the 'enemy' as the 'other' is definitely correct and a similar argument was made by Isaac (2004: 286) for the fifth-century writers in particular. However, the opposition (perhaps excessively magnified by modern commentators for rhetorical effect) between two, certainly problematic but suitably vague and overarching categories (Greek and barbarian) clearly does feature prominently in Classical Greek literature and, whether or not one sees this as amounting to strong antithetical 'othering', the practice of setting Greeks apart from 'barbarians' (in most cases to the detriment of the 'barbarians') is detectable or at the least alluded to in virtually all the sources that are available to us regardless of the possible pluralism of individual authors such as Herodotus and Sophocles (see Apfel 2011). Why this is so and the historical context that brought about this phenomenon in Greek literature are the focal points of discussion of this chapter. The reality of Greek–non-Greek interactions was of course likely to have been very different from this naïve dichotomy and I have already indicated this at length in my 2009 publication.
- 6 E. Hall (1989: 17). Bacon (1961), who identifies much of the same features as Hall in her observation of the Greek representation of non-Greeks in tragedy, argues that in Aeschylus and Sophocles barbarians are not presented as being inferior, and that it was Euripides who was responsible for indulging in 'orientalism', 36ff., 62ff., 168ff. It is probably anachronistic to accuse any classical writer of 'orientalism' as Edward Said (1979) does in his assessment of Aeschylus' *Persae*. I would, however, to a limited extent agree with Hall that the polarity of Greeks and barbarians is already significantly accentuated in Aeschylus. The anti-barbarian outbursts in Euripides, too, are also often deeply ironic and do not necessarily reflect Euripides' own views. See Flower (2000: 90), S. Said (2002: 84ff.), Kim (2009: 160–1). However, the very fact that the rhetoric of polarity (no matter how ironic it was even to certain Greek writers themselves) exists in virtually all our classical sources is surely a reflection of its importance in intellectual discourse of the Classical Period.

- 7 E. Hall (1989: 79).
- 8 According to Isaac (2004: 257ff., 278), viewing the Persian Wars depicted by Herodotus and Aeschylus as a conflict between two sets of ideals (democracy and freedom against tyranny and slavery) and diametrically opposed system of values (Greek and Oriental) is surely anachronistic. He challenges Hall's view that Greek tragedy from the very beginning drew consistently on the contrast between Greek democracy and barbarian despotism, and concludes (2004: 302) that it was the rhetoricians and philosophers of the fourth century, espousing 'imperialistic' ideology of Greek expansion into Asia, who first created a rigid hierarchical Greek-barbarian divide.
- 9 E. Hall (1989: 80).
- 10 Isaac (2004: 257) erroneously sees this as a fourth-century articulation.
- 11 The possibility is also suggested in a few lines by Tuplin (1999: 57), but he offers no corroborating evidence and does not elaborate.
- 12 For a fuller discussion, see Kim (2009: 11–18).
- 13 Coleman (1997: 187).
- 14 Ross (2005: 299, 314) argues for an unstable and undeveloped form of non-oppositional, proto-pan-Hellenism in the *Iliad* based on linguistic unity among the Achaeans. Mackie (1996: 21, 97) argues for the contrast between the supposed unity among the Achaeans based on common language and the disorder among the Trojans and their allies who fail to form a cohesive society due to the different languages spoken by various groups forming the Trojan alliance. While Homer does point out the linguistic diversity among the Trojan allies (*Il.* 4.433–8), it is extremely far-fetched to argue that the Achaeans demonstrate better cohesion in the epic due to the common language spoken by the various contingents making up their army. The very theme of the *Iliad* is strife and discord among the supposedly more cohesive Achaeans, not the Trojans.
- 15 For further discussion on the issue of ethnocentricity in the *Iliad*, see van der Valk (1985: 373–76), Traill (1990: 299–303), Heath (2005: 62–8), etc. The majority of the scholarship on the issue is sceptical about the presence of ethnocentrism in Homer.
- 16 Osborne, following Burkert's argument, suggests that the *Iliad* (9.381–4) seems to allude to the fall of Egyptian Thebes which capitulated to Ashurbanipal in 663 BC. If so, the *Iliad* and consequently the *Odyssey* could not have been composed much earlier than 650 BC. A similar date is also suggested for Hesiod. See Osborne (1996: 159). An extensive discussion of this complex issue is beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 17 Jacob (1991: 24–30). See Vidal-Naquet (1986: 19).
- 18 Vidal-Naquet (1986: 21) postulates the existence of a hierarchy that descends from cultivators to hunters to the lowest tier of shepherds.
- 19 See Shaw (1982: 21) for a detailed discussion on the pastoralism and savagery of the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey*.
- 20 See Vidal-Naquet (1986: 21). Note also Müller (1972: 57). Müller suggests that Homer's portrait of the Cyclopes resembles closely the barbarian representations found in Babylonian literature. The period of the composition of the *Odyssey* was indeed the period during which Greece was most susceptible to Near Eastern influence. Of course, at this point no attempt was made to categorise the peoples of the Near East as inherently different. See also Burkert (1992).
- 21 It is true that a degree of hostility towards the Phoenicians is perceptible in the story of Eumaeus, where they are portrayed as being treacherous slave-traders (15.416).

See also 14.287ff. However, in 13.272ff., the Phoenicians are depicted as reliable traders with whom one can do business without fear of foul play. Indeed, of all the peoples of the Mediterranean outside the Aegean, the people with whom the Greeks had most frequent contact were Phoenician traders. The Greek attitude towards them was therefore more complex and varied.

- 22 J. Hall (1997: 47).
- 23 See J. Hall (2002: 168–71).
- 24 E. Lévy (1991a: 60); J. Hall (2006: 274).
- 25 Alty (1982: 1–14, esp. 13).
- 26 See also Mitchell (2007: 65).
- 27 See Crielaard (2010: 61–2) for the internationalism and cosmopolitanism of the Archaic east Greek elite who viewed the adoption of Lydian, Egyptian and other 'foreign' Near Eastern habits and costumes as a mark of elite status.
- 28 See Astour (1967: 358) for an argument that Near Eastern influence on Greece was already significant in the Mycenaean period. Astour also contemplates the colonization of parts of Greece by Phoenicians or another western Semitic people in the second millennium on the basis of the perceived similarity in the names of the Semitic tribe of the Danuna in Cilicia and the Danaans. Although such a colonizing movement from the Levant to the Aegean is not entirely unthinkable, more evidence is needed to prove that Semitic elements in Greek mythology and material culture actually reflect a full-scale migration of Semitic peoples into Greece. Factors other than migration may well explain the extensive Near Eastern features of Greek culture, such as extended interaction through trade and intermarriage among the elite. See also S. Morris (1992), who also vouches for extensive Near Eastern influence on Greece stretching back from well before the Archaic Period that gave birth to the Homeric epics.
- 29 Hipponax fr. 92.1–2 (West); *Hom. hymn Aphr.* 113–16.
- 30 Crielaard (2010: 45–6).
- 31 See Cook (1962: 66).
- 32 See Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 184).
- 33 Cook (1962: 65).
- 34 Malkin (1998: 60). Gomme, Andrewes and Dover (1970: 207) suggest that all of Thucydides' dates for the foundation of these colonies are based on generation counts and that their accuracy is in doubt.
- 35 Malkin (1998: 61).
- 36 See above (n. 16). Due to the oral nature of its transmission, the contents were likely to have been highly exposed to extensive interpolations and minor changes.
- 37 See also Werner (1989: 170ff.) for further discussion on the Carians in Homer.
- 38 For discussion, see relevant sections in Hornblower (1991a: 17–18) and Gomme et al. (1950, Vol. 1: 98). Strabo, xiv.2.28, also noted this contradiction between Thucydides and the text of Homer available to him. For an in-depth analysis of this section of Strabo, see Almagor (2005: 44–7).
- 39 Crielaard (2010: 57).
- 40 Hdt. 1.146.
- 41 Rochette (1997–98: 229, 232–5) argues that this section of the Catalogues is indeed a later addition to the epic, but places the date of interpolation as some time in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Following Strabo's speculation about the meaning of the word, he also argues that it is a designation for partially Hellenized Anatolians

- who spoke Greek badly. It will be argued subsequently that this is an argument based on faulty etymology.
- 42 See Gera (2003: 2).
- 43 E. Lévy (1984: 6).
- 44 See Dueck (2010: 242–3) for discussion.
- 45 Diller (1962: 69).
- 46 Mackie (1996) exaggerates the significance of the linguistic divide between the Greeks and Trojan allies in the *Iliad* and suggests that speaking a common language encouraged greater solidarity among Greeks. This is, however, as pointed out earlier (cf. n. 14), hardly substantiated by the plot of the *Iliad*.
- 47 See Green (2004: 112) for further discussion of this fragment.
- 48 See Harris (1971: 62–5) for a detailed discussion on the Persian conquest of Ionia.
- 49 Broadhead (1960: xxx).
- 50 In somewhat ironic contrast to the later denigration of the Ionians as cowards in later classical literature, for example the Hippocratic Treatise *Airs Waters Places*.
- 51 Emlyn-Jones (1980) argues that the references to Ionia and Ionians at Salamis in the *Persae* are designed to quietly brush over the Athenian shame at having been forced to fight their own race (Ionians) in the battle and are really an attempt to emphasize Athenian solidarity with and sympathy for the Ionians in the aftermath of Ionian liberation from Persian rule.
- 52 Pseudo-Plutarch, *Stromateis* 2; Hippolytus of Rome, *Philosophumena* 16. See Müller (1972: 76).
- 53 Munn (2006: 208).
- 54 See Boardman (1980) for an examination of Greek interaction with the Phrygians and Lydians before the Persian conquest.
- 55 This is denied by Cawkwell who argues that tyrants in Ionia were a native, internal phenomenon that later became amenable and useful to the Persians. See Cawkwell (2005: 33–4).
- 56 Munn (2006: 195ff.) suggests that the map may well be in essence a Lydo-centric map of the Lydian Empire, with Sardis as the capital of the *oikoumene* (the inhabited world), not a Hellenocentric one. See also Romm (2010: 217) for further discussion on Anaximander's map and that of Hecataeus.
- 57 See Harris (1971: 23–4). Mitchell (2007: 62) argues that anti-Lydian, rather than anti-Persian, sentiment in the mid-sixth century BC in Greek Asia Minor was the first, major impetus behind the antithetical othering of non-Greeks. However, the Greek representation of the familiar Lydians in the mid-sixth century certainly did not amount to denigration or 'orientalization' (114), as Mitchell believes.
- 58 Sedentarization of Iranians in Persia only began in the seventh century BC. See Kuhrt (1995: 653).
- 59 See Drews (2004: 136) who emphasizes the Iranian role in introducing mounted warfare into the ancient Near East and recognizes the dominant role of cavalry in the Persian armies.
- 60 Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 212) point out that Iran was very underdeveloped and economically backward in comparison with the Near East during the Achaemenid period.
- 61 For information on Hecataeus, see Müller (1972: 94–101) and Shahar (2004: 27ff.).
- 62 Briant (2002b) deduces from information provided by Darius' inscriptions at Bisitun that satrapies already existed before Darius, under Cyrus and Cambyses (p. 64).

However, it was certainly Darius who brought these administrative reforms to completion.

- 63 Again Briant (2002b: 69) informs us that Darius was not the first king to impose tribute or taxes, but was the first to 'fix the basis of the levies as well as their exact amounts'.
- 64 Briant (2002b: 172ff.).
- 65 See Cameron (1948) and Hallock (1969).
- 66 Briant (2002b: 174).
- 67 See Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 131, 184–8).
- 68 DPe; DSe; DNa; XPh. See Briant (2002: 175).
- 69 Briant (2002b: 177). See also Kent (1950: 117) for discussion on the use of this word in the plural form *dahyava* meaning nations, countries in the Bisitun inscriptions.
- 70 Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 251).
- 71 The Persepolis fortification tablets specify travel rations provided mainly to travellers to and from India, Kandahar, Bactria, Arachosia, Areia and Kerman in the East, and Egypt, Sardis and Babylon in the West (PF 1285–579 and 2049–57), Hallock (1968: 6). Skudrian (Scythian), Cappadocian, Sogdian, Arabian and Assyrian travellers and workers are also mentioned (PF 850, 851–3, 867, 1006, 1009, 1016, 1056, 1175, 1534) together with Sardian (Lydian) blacksmiths (PF 873) and Babylonian scribes (PF 1807–8, 1821).
- 72 See the edicts of Cyrus and Darius in the Book of Ezra 2.4; 6.3–12. For discussion on the authenticity of these documents, see Cowley (1923: 62). Also an Aramaic papyrus document (Cowley, no. 21) from the Persian period shows that Persian kings paid careful attention to details of Jewish religion. As Hornblower (1991b: 63) notes, 'it stipulates the days of unleavened bread and gives instructions for abstinence from beer and work' during Passover.
- 73 Observe the careful attempt made by Cyrus after his conquest of Babylon to cater for the religious sensibilities of his new subjects both for the sake of propaganda and for legitimization of his rule. See discussion on the Cylinder of Cyrus in Mallowan (1985: 409–12). For a more in-depth analysis of Achaemenid religious policies in Babylonia, Egypt, Anatolia and Judah, see Fried (2004).
- 74 See Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 298, 301, 307, 319).
- 75 D. Lewis (1985: 104, 108).
- 76 There is even a coin bearing the Athenian owl impressed in lieu of a stamp seal on PF 2053. See Hallock (1969: 2).
- 77 It is also interesting to note Briant's observation (1992: 177) that it is always ethnic groups, not administrative districts, that are represented in Persian royal documents, inscriptions and palace friezes. The ethnic diversity of the empire was used as a symbol of the unbounded nature of the king's power and authority.
- 78 See Christ (1994: 167–202) for a detailed discussion on how Herodotus uses the geographical and ethnographic investigations of the Persian royal inquirer to define and lend authority to his own inquiry.
- 79 See Millard (1987: 111); Michalowski (2010: 148).
- 80 Horowitz (1988: 154). Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 285) argue that the map places Babylon at the centre. See also M. West (1971: 49ff.).
- 81 Horowitz (1998: 40–1) points out that both traditions share a belief that the inhabited world is surrounded by water and both use geometric shapes to represent topographical features. For further discussion, see Dilke (1985).
- 82 Crielaard (2010: 41).

- 83 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001: 325). See also Kuhrt (2002: 22).
- 84 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001: 326).
- 85 Kuhrt (2002: 23).
- 86 Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989: 183) suggest that this refers not to the islanders but the Daskyleion satrapy.
- 87 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2001: 329). See also Kent (1950: 136).
- 88 Hdt. 2.178. See Austin (1970: 26ff.).
- 89 Cook (1962: 66).
- 90 Tavernier (2007: 417). We also find a similar term rendered in Elamite script as *ba-ra-bar-ras*: PFNN 704:23, 26.
- 91 Tavernier (2007: 442).
- 92 Oppenheim (1985: 577).
- 93 The word *abara* from the root *bar* was frequently used in Old Persian inscriptions to denote the act of bearing tribute (*baji*) to the Great King (DPe 9–13, DNa 19–20, DSe 18). See Balcer (1989: 10) and Herrenschmidt (1989: 107). In Babylonia, the Persian loanword *baru* from *bara* was also used to denote taxes due from bow lands (*bit qashti*), fields or gardens held in what amounted to a feudal tenure. The owner(s) of the bow lands (usually soldiers (*qashti* is a reference to archers)) were responsible for the annual delivery of certain amounts of staples produced in their holdings. See Oppenheim (1985: 573–74). Texts from Ur tell us that taxes incumbent on oblates was also referred to as *baru* (UET 4 48–9, Artaxerxes II), Stolper (1989: 151). Evidently *bara* used most often to refer to taxes due from bow lands came to mean taxes in general, either before or during the reign of Artaxerxes.
- 94 E. Hall (1989: 4).
- 95 Interestingly, according to Balcer (1989: 6–7), Herodotus may have been correct in his observation that Persis, the homeland of the Persians, alone was exempt from taxation and not tributary (3.97.1; 3.67.3). Thus a *barbaros*, taxpayer, was probably a non-Persian, conquered subject of the Achaemenid king with all the connotations of servility and subjugation attached to that status, hence the Greek reluctance to accept this status.
- 96 Weidner (1913: 303).
- 97 Halloran (2006: 29).
- 98 Weidner (1913: 304).
- 99 Gelb et al. (1956: 108–9) and von Soden (1965: 106). Weidner argues that this word signified a foreign dog, introduced into Mesopotamia from outside, but this seems to be merely conjecture lacking sufficient proof.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Militarev et al. (2005: 105).
- 102 Archilochus, 93aW, likens Thracians to dogs, but uses the common Greek word for dog, not *barbaros*. See also Owen (2003: 1, 7).
- 103 The Anatolian Greeks also paid tribute to the Lydians, but the degree to which their internal autonomy was infringed under the Lydians was mild in comparison to the interference of the Persians. Imperial levies and taxes, though perhaps not as ruinous as many critics have traditionally asserted, nevertheless were resented by the Ionians who were not used to such a high degree of foreign intrusion into local affairs. See Harris (1971: 104–38, 175–7) and Balcer (1989: 1–27).
- 104 Hecataeus fragment 119 ap. Strabo 7. 7.1. See also Buck (1979: 45–6).
- 105 See Herodotus 1.141, 143, 148, 170; 6.7.
- 106 Crielaard (2010: 55).

- 107 For the possibility of pan-Ionianism having functioned as the model for fifth-century pan-Hellenism, see Malkin (2001: 8).
- 108 For discussion on the nature of the speech of Aristagoras as it is preserved in Herodotus, see Solmsen (1943: 199) and Pelling (2007). See also Flower (2000: 71). The speech may well be rhetorical and later fifth-century influence on its content cannot be denied. However, when taken together with the other east Greek, anti-barbarian outbursts from the same period mentioned earlier, there seems to be no reason to doubt the authenticity of Aristagoras' appeal to the common Hellenicity of all Greeks in opposition to the barbarians.

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The Stories of the Others: Storytelling and Intercultural Communication in the Herodotean Mediterranean

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The publication in 1980 of Francois Hartog's *Le miroir d'Hérodote* and its translation in English in 1988 brought a widespread shift in the study of Herodotus, Greek ethnography and Greek identity.¹ According to Hartog, Herodotus' work was primarily an exploration in the depiction of the Other. Greek identity and Greek cultural experience, or, as Hartog often seems to conflate, Athenian identity and Athenian cultural experience, provided the necessary code to understand the various barbarian peoples depicted in Herodotus' work. Herodotus' barbarians are not there because Herodotus is primarily interested in conveying information about these peoples; they are there because they provide a means of thinking about Greek identity, Greek culture and the great Greek achievement of defeating the Persian Empire. The depiction of these peoples is thus conditioned by their differences, in one way or another, from what is considered to be Greek identity and culture: the Herodotean barbarians are defined and presented in juxtaposition to what is seen as the Greek standard. This is the reason that one cannot attempt a mere comparison between the barbarian images of Herodotus and what we can learn about these barbarian peoples from archaeology, epigraphy and their native sources.² Herodotus' images are exercises in the depiction of the Other, not objective analyses of non-Greek communities and cultures; they tell us more about Greek self-perception and self-definition than about the barbarians they purport to describe. Herodotus' work is an exercise in alterity and polarity.³

A year after Hartog's translation in English, a second important book was translated from its German original of 1971: this was Detlev Fehling's work on Herodotus' sources.⁴ According to Fehling, Herodotean source citations should not be seen as the result of research conducted by the historian; instead, they are fabrications that serve to enhance the verisimilitude of the stories reported by covering the tracks of Herodotus' fabrication of these stories. Fehling's argument that Herodotus has fabricated his sources stressed in particular a certain kind of story: these stories can be called 'the stories of the others.'⁵ These Herodotean stories which depict non-Greeks,

or which are attributed by Herodotus to non-Greek sources, have an evident Greek colouring and are meaningful largely in a Greek context. Given the insuperable gap between Greeks and barbarians, one could not expect that a non-Greek would ever be able to provide Herodotus with such Hellenocentric accounts. Could an Egyptian ever present the story of Proteus and Helen (2.112-20), or the story of the foundation of Dodona (2.54-7)? It is thus impossible that any of these 'stories of the others' were actually narrated to Herodotus by any of his barbarian informants; therefore, Fehling argued that Herodotus had himself fabricated most of the stories he attributed to his non-Greek sources. Fehling was not interested in the subject of polarity and alterity; nevertheless, his vision of Greek identity was essentially similar to that of Hartog. What was implicit in Hartog's lack of interest in the historical veracity of Herodotus' barbarian accounts becomes explicit in Fehling's judgement of the incompatibility of Greek-barbarian identities and the kind of Hellenocentric stories presented by Herodotus' 'barbarian informants'.

Hartog and Fehling have both raised important issues and have understandably created debates which are still ongoing. However, I would like to argue that both their approaches are deeply flawed, because they put the cart in front of the horse. We cannot start understanding the discursive frameworks within which the Herodotean stories are situated, or evaluate the historical veracity of Herodotus' account, before we study the process through which the stories that found their place in the Herodotean text were generated and communicated. The reason has been presented in a recent book by Joseph Skinner.⁶ The Mediterranean world at the time of Herodotus was characterized by centuries of cultural contact and exchange. The networks that moved goods, people, ideas and technologies, together with the consequences of Mediterranean-wide colonization and the effects of living under and working for the great empires of the East (Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Lydia, Persia), had created a world in which intercultural encounters were a reality for hundreds of thousands of people.⁷ The problem is that historians of antiquity have devoted little time and effort in thinking about the forms and patterns of inter-cultural communication. In what ways and in what forms did people coming from different communities and cultures communicate with each other? How were stories and information transmitted between cultures? To what extent did the means and forms of inter-cultural communication transform stories in the process of transmission and in what ways? What were the uses of such stories once transmitted?

These are admittedly difficult questions. But I would like to suggest that it is in asking such questions regarding the patterns and forms of intercultural communication that we should approach the stories of Herodotus in the first place. Instead of blindly following a simplistic model of polarity, as suggested by some of our ancient sources, and of alleging fabrication when the evidence does not fit the simplistic model, we should try to explore the ways in which the stories in Herodotus presuppose and reflect this long-term process of intercultural communication in the ancient Mediterranean world. I am by no means suggesting that we should reduce Herodotus to a passive mouthpiece of these processes of intercultural communication. There is hardly any doubt that Herodotus has his own agendas and that the stories he reports have undertaken modifications, displacements and transformations in

the light of his patterns of composition and emplotting.⁸ But we shall never properly understand what Herodotus does with these stories unless we try to understand the process of creation, exchange and transmission of these stories until the point they surface in Herodotus' narrative.

What evidence do we have of such processes? Let me start by looking at three examples in an effort to illustrate the communicative context that we need to imagine in order to situate Herodotus' stories. Herodotus has many stories concerning the Greek and Carian mercenaries that became an important factor of the political and military history of Saite Egypt. These mercenaries and their descendants became the nucleus of the Greek and Carian communities that flourished in the Egyptian capital of Memphis for many centuries before and after Herodotus' time (2.151-4).⁹ The life of these Greek and Carian immigrants in Egypt is nicely illustrated by the 'bilingual' stelae of Memphis.¹⁰ These are stelae with two or more registers, which have been called bilingual, because they combine registers in typical Egyptian fashion (e.g. with scenes of the deceased in front of the enthroned Osiris) with registers with *ekphora* scenes which are typical of Greek art. The majority of these stelae carry inscriptions either in both hieroglyphic and Carian or only in Carian;¹¹ but a recent find has an inscription in the Greek language for a woman whose fragmentarily preserved name is probably not Greek.¹² These immigrants, the result of processes of mobility and power put in motion by the empires of the East, chose to be commemorated with stelae which combined Egyptian, Carian and Greek elements.

My second example comes from Athens. It is a fourth-century epitaph found in the mining area of Laureion.¹³

Atotas the miner

From the Black Sea Atotas, the great-hearted Paphlagonian,
put to rest his body from the toils far away from his fatherland.

Nobody vied [with me] in [my] art; I am from the stem of Pylaimenes,
who died subdued by the hand of Achilles.¹⁴

Whether Atotas was a slave or a freedman at the time of his death is impossible to tell; that he must have started as a slave miner is indisputable. We are dealing with a person who was proud of his manual skill and of his national origins. And what is most tantalizing, he was able to express his national credentials in a language that could appeal to the Greek reader of this epitaph. This Paphlagonian was clearly steeped in Greek culture. The epigram uses Homeric expressions; Atotas is described as *megathymos Paphlagon*, which brings into mind the verse of the *Iliad* in which Paphlagonians are described with exactly the same adjective (5.577). Interestingly, though, the Homeric version of the death of Pylaimenes is different from that of Atotas, since in the *Iliad* he is killed by Menelaus (5.576): being killed by Achilles is certainly more glorious, adding to the aggrandizement of Atotas' mythical ancestor. Clearly, Atotas could combine a good knowledge of Greek mythology with national pride and his personal or local Paphlagonian version of mythical events.¹⁵ Atotas, a natally alienated individual par excellence, created a new identity for himself in his new homeland. How was the Paphlagonian miner Atotas able to acquire the necessary knowledge to

portray himself in such characteristically Greek terms? What processes of intercultural communication do we have to assume?

My third source is a literary work: Xenophon's *Anabasis*. There is no doubt that it is not a transparent and objective reporting of what actually happened during the expedition of the Ten Thousand.¹⁶ While there is no actual agreement on what the best prism through which one can understand Xenophon's omissions, selections, rhetoric and presentation is, there is nevertheless a widespread consensus that the stories related in the text largely reflect what actually happened, even if they have been modified or retold from a particular perspective.

A first story comes from the aftermath of Cunaxa, when Cyrus has been killed, Tissaphernes has managed by treachery to arrest and execute the Greek generals, and the Greek army is debating what plan to follow in order to survive and return back home. Xenophon has already suggested that the only way forward was to fight their way out of Mesopotamia and back into the Greek world, instead of capitulating or collaborating with the Persian king. His proposal was refuted by a man named Apollonides, who spoke in the Boeotian dialect, and who proposed that negotiation with the king was the only option (3.1.26). Apollonides' speech was met with a furious refutation by Xenophon, who pointed out the treachery of the Persians and the futility of trusting them and concluded:

'In my opinion, gentlemen, we should not simply refuse to admit this fellow to companionship with us, but should deprive him of his captaincy, lay packs on his back, and treat him as that sort of a creature. For the fellow is a disgrace both to his native state and to the whole of Greece, since, being a Greek, he is still a man of this kind.' Then Agasias, a Stymphalian, broke in and said: 'For that matter, this fellow has nothing to do either with Boeotia or with any part of Greece at all, for I have noticed that he has both his ears bored, like a Lydian's.' In fact, it was so. He, therefore, was driven away. (3.1.30-2)¹⁷

This is a characteristic example of the widespread practice of ethnography from everyday people: notice the role in the encounter of the observations of Apollonides' dialect, his bored ears, and the ethnographic knowledge that this is a practice associated with the Lydians. This incident obviously can be seen as a verification of the alterity model and the xenophobic aspect of the Greek attitude towards the barbarians; the bored ears are evidence of a non-Greek custom, and therefore Apollonides is immediately designated as a barbarian and driven away, in conditions of immediate danger. But things are not so simple. If Apollonides was actually a Lydian, it is remarkable that he bore a Greek name and was able to pass along as a Boeotian. But in fact we cannot be certain that Apollonides was indeed Lydian; it has been proposed that he might have come from Aeolis in Asia Minor, where a dialect similar to Boeotian was spoken and where proximity with Lydia meant that certain Lydian customs could be adopted by the local Greeks; or he might indeed have been a Boeotian who had spent time in Aeolis during the Ionian war and adopted Lydian customs.¹⁸ Whichever of these three scenarios we opt for, it is obvious that the strict polarity between Greek and barbarian appears problematic in practice.

There is nevertheless no doubt that a discourse of alterity is applied in this

particular case in order to exclude the Other; but this example is a good illustration that this discourse is a strategy, and not the quintessential Greek view of the Other. Xenophon has just proposed a bold and extremely risky strategy of escaping from their cul-de-sac; in order to convince his fellow soldiers to accept a policy that looked totally against the odds, he has employed a pan-Hellenic and anti-barbarian discourse.¹⁹ This discourse was a strategy that was necessitated by the particular context and its needs; and the same discourse is employed as a strategy to marginalize and exclude those who were opposing the policy proposed. If indeed Apollonides was Aeolian or Boeotian, the irony is even greater, since the discourse of alterity was employed against a fellow Greek. Since Apollonides was able to address the assembly, it is clear that in other contexts Greeks did not object to an Aeolian or Boeotian wearing barbarian earrings, or saw no problem in accepting a Lydian who successfully passed as a Boeotian. The alterity discourse is only employed in a certain context and for pursuing a particular strategy.

That things could be very different in other contexts is shown by a very illuminating passage that deserves to be quoted in full. While at Cotyora on the Black Sea coast, the Greek army received ambassadors from Corylas, the king of the Paphlagonians, proposing a pact of non-aggression; the ambassadors were then invited to dinner by the Greeks. After eating followed entertainment from the various contingents of the Ten Thousand (6.1.5-13):²⁰

After they had made libations and sung the paeon, two Thracians rose up first and began a dance in full armour to the music of a flute, leaping high and lightly and using their sabres; finally, one struck the other, as everybody thought, and the second man fell, in a rather skilful way. And the Paphlagonians set up a cry. Then the first man despoiled the other of his arms and marched out singing the Sitalcas, while other Thracians carried off the fallen dancer, as though he were dead; in fact, he had not been hurt at all ...

After this a Mysian came in, carrying a light shield in each hand, and at one moment in his dance he would go through a pantomime as though two men were arrayed against him, again he would use his shields as though against one antagonist, and again he would whirl and throw somersaults while holding the shields in his hands, so that the spectacle was a fine one. Lastly, he danced 'the Persian' dance, clashing his shields together and crouching down and then rising up again; and all this he did, keeping time to the music of the flute ...

After the Greek contingents of the Ten Thousand presented their own dances as well, the Paphlagonians were really impressed by the military format of the dances:

Thereupon the Mysian, seeing how astounded they were, persuaded one of the Arcadians who had a dancing girl to let him bring her in, after dressing her up in the finest way he could, and giving her a light shield. And she danced the Pyrrhic with grace. Then there was great applause, and the Paphlagonians asked whether women also fought by their side. And the Greeks replied that these women were precisely the ones who put the King to flight from his camp. Such was the end of that evening.²¹

This is another great illustration of ethnographic practice. What we see here is collaboration between the various Greek and non-Greek elements of the Ten Thousand in order to provide entertainment, impress the Paphlagonian ambassadors with the spectacle and their martial valour, and ensure good relations with the Paphlagonian king that would be essential for their survival. Ethnographic display is here put into the service of forging diplomatic relations. Notice also how the visual display of the dances is associated with the exchange of ethnographic information on the subjects and the stories related to the dances. Xenophon mentions that the Thracian dancer was singing a song about Sitalcas, a contemporary Thracian king; this song must have been another important source of ethnographic information. It is also important that the dancing performances betray a prior process of cultural mingling; it is not accidental that the Mysian dances a Persian dance after having served in what was originally a contingent of a Persian army. But let us also observe that there is not a trace of alterity, xenophobia or hostility in this passage. Xenophon's authorial voice clearly approves of the fine spectacle provided by the Thracians and the Mysian members of the Ten Thousand. But the most interesting thing of all is that it is the Mysian who realizes how the army can make political capital out of the entertainment and takes the initiative to convince an Arcadian to lend him his slave girl in order to dance a martial dance, a fact used by the army in order to impress upon the Paphlagonians that even the women in the army make valiant fighters. This event should not be seen as presenting a rosy picture of relationships between Greeks and barbarians; it only means that the attitudes of collaboration evident in this passage is as much part of the relationship between Greeks and Barbarians as the discourse of alterity that we saw in the previous example.

After finally managing to cross to Europe and because of the lack of alternatives due to Spartan hostility, the Ten Thousand decide to offer their services to the Thracian ruler Seuthes.²² Xenophon presents his offer on behalf of the army and Seuthes' reaction is very revealing:

Upon hearing these words Seuthes said that he should not distrust anyone who was an Athenian; for he knew, he said, that the Athenians were kinsmen of his, and he believed they were loyal friends. (7.2.31)²³

What Seuthes was probably referring to was the myth of Procne and Tereus. According to the myth, Tereus had married the Athenian princess Procne who begat their son, Itys; Tereus then raped Procne's sister, Philomela, and cut her tongue so that she would not be able to reveal the horrific truth to her sister. Nevertheless, she managed through embroidering a message on a robe to reveal the truth to Procne, who went on to kill Itys and serve him up to Tereus in order to punish him; all three of them were subsequently transformed into different birds. It is probable that in the earlier versions of the myth there was no Thracian connection to this story and Tereus was connected to Megara or to Daulis in Phocis; but in tandem with the wider process which saw the 'barbarization' of various characters in Greek myths, Tereus became identified as a Thracian king. The earliest attestation of this new version of the myth was Sophocles' lost *Tereus*;²⁴ the story was clearly taken seriously, for in a famous aside Thucydides protested against this identification.²⁵

Modern scholars have been particularly keen to stress how Greek self-definition and the 'invention of the barbarian' took place through the reinterpretation of Greek myths.²⁶ It is only recently that scholars have started to recognize that the process of turning mythical figures into barbarians could lead in the opposite direction as well; through reinterpretation and retelling, Greek myth could also be used to link together Greeks and barbarians based on the construction of fictive kinship.²⁷ Edith Hall, a prominent supporter of the alterity approach, has argued that even if that is the case in the case of Tereus, the identification was hardly designed to flatter the Thracian royal family, but rather stressed the outrageous violence that characterized Thracians in general.²⁸ Xenophon's story proves that attitudes like that of Hall are largely off the point. Seuthes does not seem to have any qualms in accepting the myth as evidence of his kinship with the Athenians; in fact, later on in his narrative of the Ten Thousand's service under Seuthes Xenophon reports that 'they gave out "Athena" as the watchword, on account of their kinship' (7.3.39). These incidents show that the use of Greek myths to forge links between Greeks and barbarians was not a process that was comprehensible by and appealing to Greeks only (though it is a Greek that relates the story in this case). Seuthes was happy to accept Greek myths and deities as a means of forging links. Even more, Xenophon illustrates one context in which many of these stories took shape through intercultural encounters: the court of a barbarian king in which many Greeks served in various capacities. Xenophon testifies that Seuthes himself had a sufficient understanding of the Greek language;²⁹ in fact, the knowledge of the Greek language in his court went significantly lower down the scale.³⁰

What does all this evidence suggest? From the bilingual stelae of Memphis, through the epitaph of a Paphlagonian slave, to the ethnography of bored ears and dances among mercenaries and the use of Greek myth by non-Greeks, the Mediterranean world of Herodotus was experiencing a very lively process of intercultural communication. The discourse of alterity is a very limiting and simplistic approach to understand this very complex world. And the examples from these various sources show that the stories of the Others found in Herodotus were not his own fabrication, but reflect Herodotus' reworking of a very widespread process of intercultural communication. Let us then proceed to examine in some detail the patterns of intercultural communication and their role in Herodotus' work along with a typology of the stories that were circulated within this process.

Patterns of intercultural communication

Cultural contact and encounters between two different groups do not lead to a single type of reaction. What we have to posit, in order to assess the process of creation of the various stories that found their way into the text of Herodotus, is a variety of patterns that the cultural encounters we examined above gave shape to. We can divide these patterns in two different ways: according to perspective and according to content. As regards perspective, stories can be told either from a Greek perspective (*interpretatio graeca*) or from a non-Greek perspective (local perspective).³¹ In other words, stories

can either try to translate the customs, values and history of one community in terms understandable by another (i.e. the Greeks in the case of Herodotus), or explain them in terms native to the community from which the stories originate. As regards content, the stories can either take as their subject issues that focus on the differences between Greeks and non-Greeks (polarity) or on common, shared or universal values and ideas (universality). Of course the division by content and the division by perspective are not mutually irreconcilable. A story, for example, can emphasize the differences between two cultures, while also trying to explain a custom of one culture in terms of the other.

The first pattern of communication is the polarity model we are so familiar with. This pattern focuses on differences between groups and creates stories which emphasize these differences. Given that *nomos* is king (Hdt. 3.38.4), every culture inclines to take its own customs as superior; accordingly, there is a strong tendency in such stories to portray other groups as inferior.³² The stories concerning Sperthias and Boulis, the Spartan messengers, are characteristic: they lecture the Persian satrap Hydarnes, who has only experienced subservience to the Persian king, on the value of Greek freedom, and they refuse to perform the Persian custom of obeisance to the king (*proskynesis*), as the Greek custom approved of obeisance only to the gods (7.135-6).

Polarity does not work only in one direction though; while some of the stories are used in order to denigrate other cultures and people and praise one's own values, it is equally possible to find stories in which the values and customs of others are used as a form of internal criticism.³³ This is the case in stories in which non-Greeks show the absurdity or problematic character of Greek customs and values. A nice example is Mardonius' speech in favour of Xerxes' plan to invade Greece.

Yet the Greeks are accustomed to wage wars, as I learn, and they do it most senselessly in their wrongheadedness and folly. When they have declared war against each other, they come down to the fairest and most level ground that they can find and fight there, so that the victors come off with great harm; of the vanquished I say not so much as a word, for they are utterly destroyed. Since they speak the same language, they should end their disputes by means of heralds or messengers, or by any way rather than fighting; if they must make war upon each other, they should each discover where they are in the strongest position and make the attempt there. (7.9)³⁴

An outsider's perspective is used in this story to criticize Greek practices of warfare as inane. We cannot verify whether Mardonius actually uttered this criticism, although that would not be implausible; what is important is that Greeks like Herodotus were willing to incorporate in their works stories which criticized their culture from an outsider's perspective (see also below the non-Greek *bon mots*).³⁵

In contrast to polarity, the second pattern of cultural communication creates stories that stress similarity; they are stories that can appeal to common or shared denominators, or present Greeks and non-Greeks as similar. It is particularly unfortunate that the discourse of alterity has effectively hidden from sight this pattern,³⁶ numerous examples of which appear in Herodotus' work. A typical example concerns

the Egyptian soldiers who in the time of pharaoh Psammetichus rebelled and escaped towards Ethiopia:

Psammetichus heard of it and pursued them; and when he overtook them, he asked them in a long speech not to desert their children and wives and the gods of their fathers. Then one of them, the story goes, pointed to his genitals and said that wherever that was, they would have wives and children. (2.30.4)³⁷

This is the kind of story that could easily be understood by both a Greek and an Egyptian: every male could understand the moral that as long as they had genitals, they could create a new family, as well as the implications of such an approach to family and mobility.³⁸

Perhaps one would think that stories which are mutually meaningful only appeal to the lowest common denominator,³⁹ but in fact such stories can relate to the most serious aspects of human existence. The story of Intaphernes' wife is justly famous: when Darius offered her the opportunity to save one of the members of her family who had been convicted to death, she opted to save the life of her brother, instead of her husband or son. To the astonished Darius who enquired about the rationale of her choice, she answered that while she could get a new husband and beget more children,⁴⁰ she could not get another brother since her parents had already died (3.119). This argument makes its presence in a notorious passage of Sophocles' *Antigone*, generating a long discussion about the authenticity of the passage.⁴¹ Comparative research has shown that this view is current in a number of cultures, so there is no reason to suppose this is an exclusively Greek view attributed to a non-Greek person.⁴² This is a story that makes sense to people of different cultural backgrounds. The story of Pharaoh Pheros is another good example, also attested in an Egyptian Demotic text.⁴³ Pheros was punished with blindness for an offensive act; an oracle predicted that he would regain his sight if he washed his eyes with the urine of a chaste woman. Predictably, there was only a single chaste woman in the whole kingdom, which the Pharaoh duly married, while exterminating all the unchaste ones (2.111). Female lack of chastity is of course an issue of male concern in very different societies.⁴⁴

Some other stories present non-Greeks expressing values and ideas which are seen as being of universal application; whether the values and ideas expressed could be comprehensible and accepted by non-Greeks, or would only be acceptable to Greeks is more debatable than the stories mentioned above.⁴⁵ I think that the most likely hypothesis is that these stories as presented in the Herodotean text are the result of a complex process of interaction. A nice example is a story concerning the Pharaoh Amasis, who was criticized by his friends for spending his day in drinking and idleness after he had finished dealing with state business. Amasis defended his habits by arguing that in the same way that constantly strung bows break, human beings need a combination of relaxation and work in order to avoid mental and physical breakdown (2.173). The motif of Amasis the merryman can be found in Egyptian literature: a Demotic tale about a sick skipper is presented as a story narrated to entertain Amasis during a hangover, after the Pharaoh had consumed a large quantity of heavy wine despite the warnings of his councillors.⁴⁶ The story found in Herodotus clearly has an Egyptian basis, reflected in other Egyptian stories about the Saite kings

who were fond of wine,⁴⁷ even if we cannot establish whether its moral would be understood by the Egyptians as well.⁴⁸

Let us now move to patterns according to perspective. A third pattern tries to explain a culture and its particular features not in terms of understanding this culture's particular views, but by creating stories that attempt to explain the other culture by means that are comprehensible in one's own cultural terms: this would mean the *interpretatio graeca* of Egyptian customs or the *interpretatio aegyptiaca* of Greek customs. On the opposite side, the fourth pattern is exemplified in stories which try to explain a particular culture and its customs, monuments and history by means of this culture's own terms. Perhaps the best way to show the difference between the third and the fourth patterns is the various stories concerning the origins of the Scythian nation that Herodotus reports. He explicitly states that one story is told by the Greeks of the Black Sea area while the other is related by the Scythians themselves (4.5.8).

The Greek story seems a characteristic example of *interpretatio graeca*. While Heracles was driving the oxen of Geryon, he came to the land of Scythia where he lost his mares and had to copulate in the area of Hylaea with a half-woman, half-snake monster in order to get them back.⁴⁹ This copulation produced three sons: Agathyrus, Gelonus and Scythes. When Heracles was leaving, he gave to the monster a bow and a belt with a flask for its buckle and told her to give the land to whomever of the sons was able to draw the bow. Scythes, the youngest one, was the only one who managed to draw the bow and thus became the ruler of the land and the ancestor of the Royal Scythians; Agathyrus and Gelonus had to leave the land of Scythia and became the ancestors of the neighbouring nations of the Agathyrsi and the Geloni (4.8-10). The origins of the Scythian nation are explained through the adventures of a famous Greek hero. In a typical fashion, Heracles' presence in Scythia forms part of a wider Greek tale: bringing to Eurystheus the oxen of Geryon, one of the famous Twelve Labours. Let us now see the Scythian story:

The Scythians say that their nation is the youngest in the world, and that it came into being in this way. A man whose name was Targitaus appeared in this country, which was then desolate. They say that his parents were Zeus and a daughter of the Borysthenes River ... Such was Targitaus' lineage; and he had three sons: Lipoxais, Arpoxais, and Colaxais, youngest of the three. In the time of their rule (the story goes) certain implements – namely, a plough, a yoke, a sword, and a flask, all of gold – fell down from the sky into Scythia. The eldest of them, seeing these, approached them meaning to take them; but the gold began to burn as he neared, and he stopped. Then the second approached, and the gold did as before. When these two had been driven back by the burning gold, the youngest brother approached and the burning stopped, and he took the gold to his own house. In view of this, the elder brothers agreed to give all the royal power to the youngest. (4.5)⁵⁰

The story continues by showing how the different Scythian groups are descended from the three sons of Targitaus and finishes off by linking the miraculous golden objects with some Scythian rituals and customs (4.7). Some scholars have attempted

to interpret the golden objects in the light of the three functions of Indo-European social ideology;⁵¹ whether one accepts this interpretation or not, it is obvious that this is a totally different kind of story from that propounded by the Black Sea Greeks.⁵² There are no figures of Greek mythology in the Scythian tale and there are no links to any Greek tales or Greek concerns; it contains only native Scythian characters and is related to purely Scythians customs.

The different stories about the Scythians present the distinction between the third and the fourth patterns of communication in ideal clarity. In practice, Herodotean stories can show enormous complexity. We can find stories of non-Greek content similar to the Scythian story of Scythian origins,⁵³ or cases of *interpretatio graeca* which seem to have little connection with non-Greek views and traditions.⁵⁴ But equally interesting are those stories that seem to partake of both patterns in a complex form of interaction. This is clearly an issue that will require future study, but I want to draw attention here to one aspect of this phenomenon. This is the construction of stories in order to account in narrative form for non-Greek traditions, customs or rituals:⁵⁵ in other words, the use of narrative as a *media res* between *interpretatio graeca* and pure local lore. In particular, Herodotus' book on Egypt is full of stories which attempt to account for rituals, monuments or objects in narrative terms. The two stories narrated about Pharaoh Mycerinus can be seen as attempts to explain Egyptian rituals by means of storytelling. One story narrates how after the death of Mycerinus' daughter, the king built a hollow cow of wood and after gilding it buried her in it; this gilded cow was kept in a chamber of the royal palace of Sais, where they would burn incense and light a lamp all night long. Herodotus provides a description of the statue and narrates how it is brought to light annually, when the Egyptians mourn for Isis, because the girl begged her father when she was dying that once a year she should see the sun (2.129-32). It is clear that this is an attempt to explain the rituals connected to Isis not by recourse to Egyptian religious beliefs, but through constructing an elaborate and fascinating story which is understandable in terms of Greek culture.⁵⁶ In the story of Mycerinus' oracle, it is predicted that he would rule only for another six years, although he had been a wise and virtuous ruler and in contrast to his predecessors, who had enjoyed long reigns despite being unjust; in response, Mycerinus used lamps in order to turn the nights into days and prove the oracle wrong by living 12 'years' instead of six (2.133). As Stephanie West has noticed, both the religious principle that gods do not care to reward just and virtuous behaviour and the fact that Mycerinus must have been quite old by the time he came to rule, and thus could not justly complain that his life was cut short, are difficult to explain on their own; but the story becomes meaningful if the purpose of the oracle is to explain Mycerinus' reaction to keep lamps alight.⁵⁷ But it has also been convincingly shown that the Herodotean story is related to an earlier Egyptian story about Mycerinus.⁵⁸ These examples should be sufficient to show the complexity in which Herodotean stories employ different patterns of intercultural communication.

Types of Greek stories

Let us move from the patterns exemplified by the stories to the stories' types. We can posit one major division. On the one hand are stories which relate to objects, practices and people; in effect, they are either connected to them, or are aetiological. On the other hand, we can find stories which are related to interactive contexts: such stories emerge out of these contexts, or take these contexts as their setting.

Some stories are clearly the result of efforts to explain or describe particular monuments and objects: some of these are non-Greek objects and monuments found in Greece, or Greek monuments and objects which relate to non-Greeks; others are objects and monuments found in non-Greek countries. Among Croesus' dedications at Delphi, Herodotus mentions 'a female figure five feet high, which the Delphians assert to be the statue of the woman who was Croesus' baker' (1.51.5). We are not told why the Delphians thought that the statue represented Croesus' baker; there was probably a story related to the statue and it is likely that it arose out of some peculiar feature of the statue.⁵⁹ According to Herodotus, the only marvellous monument of Lydia was the tomb of Alyattes, whose enormous mound of earth was constructed by the men of the marketplace, the craftsmen and the prostitutes (1.93.2). Again some story, which we are not told, must have explained why the building of the monument was attributed to craftsmen and prostitutes. Referring to the legendary Egyptian king Sesostris, Herodotus mentions two reliefs carved on the living rock from different parts of Ionia, which depicted a warrior with spear and bow accompanied by an inscription in a script that was taken for Egyptian hieroglyphs (1.106). Herodotus was probably the first to associate these carved reliefs, which in reality were Hittite monuments with inscriptions in what is conventionally called Hittite Hieroglyphic, with the figure of Sesostris; to other Greeks it seemed more natural to associate these monuments with a script that looked like Egyptian hieroglyphic with a figure known from Greek myth. This figure was Memnon, the legendary king of the Ethiopians, who had participated in the Trojan War. It is not difficult to imagine how these monuments could be related to Memnon's trip to fight together with his Trojan allies.

In Scythia, Herodotus reports that 'there is one most marvellous thing for me to mention: they show a footprint of Heracles by the Tyras river stamped on rock, like the mark of a man's foot, but forty inches in length' (4.82). The statue of Pharaoh Sethos holding a mouse (2.141) is the generator of a story of how the Pharaoh defeated the Assyrians through an attack of mice, who ate through the quivers, bows and shield handles of the Assyrian army.⁶⁰ The story about how Sesostris escaped from a burning house by treading on two of his sons (2.107) can be plausibly seen as an explanation of the Egyptian convention of depicting the victorious pharaoh with his feet on the heads of his prostrate foes, who are depicted on a smaller scale.⁶¹ The smallest of the three great pyramids was explained through the story of how Cheops prostituted his own daughter, who built the pyramid out of the stones left by her lovers as a present (2.126). We could go further and say that certain famous monuments and objects tend to attract stories which become attached to them, or to the persons who are connected with these objects and monuments.

Other stories are the result of efforts to explain customs, rituals or ideas. The custom of women in certain Ionian cities not to eat together with their husbands or call them by their name is explained through a story of how the original Greek colonists killed the Carian inhabitants and married their daughters and wives, who consequently passed down the custom of abstention in order to protest and commemorate the massacre of their relatives (1.146). The Spartan custom of calling a cup of strong and undiluted wine 'Scythian cup' is attributed to a visit of the Scythians after the failed campaign of Darius to enlist the Spartans in a joint campaign against the Persians. As a result of this visit, the Spartan king Cleomenes learnt the drinking habits of the Scythians and became mad due to heavy drinking (6.84). The Scythian custom of carrying flasks attached to their belts is explained by the objects that Heracles gave to the monster mother of the Scythian nation to be given to the son who would rule Scythia (4.10).

Finally, stories are attached to specific individuals or occasions. Sometimes the individual or the occasion functions as a peg on which to append the story and the emphasis is on the story or motif, not necessarily on the individual, because many of these individuals might otherwise be insignificant from other points of view. Narrating the retreat of the Persian army after the catastrophic Scythian campaign, Herodotus relates the following story:

This Megabazus is forever remembered by the people of the Hellespont for replying, when he was told at Byzantium that the people of Calchedon had founded their town seventeen years before the Byzantines had founded theirs, that the Calchedonians must at that time have been blind, for had they not been, they would never have chosen the worse site for their city when they might have had the better. (4.144)

The reason the story seems to be remembered is because of the *bon mot*, which the Byzantines would be happy to use against Calchedonians, not because of the importance or notoriety of Megabazus himself.

But there are individuals who are widely seen as important and therefore stories related to them tend to be widely disseminated as well as widely attested stories or motifs tend to be attached to them. Whether these individuals are historical figures or not is not necessarily important from our point of view. There are stories which locate figures in the world of the fairy tale, like the Phrygian ruler Midas and the Lydian king Gyges.⁶² Possibly historical figures can be transformed into legendary figures whose exploits do not bear much relationship to the historical figures: Sesostris or Semiramis are two famous examples of this process. On the other hand, historical or possibly historical figures can be transformed into *personae* or types which are used in order to exemplify particular kinds of lessons, or to narrate particular kinds of stories: the historical figure of Anacharsis the Scythian ruler is transformed into the *persona* of the wise primitive barbarian who acts as an external critic of the values and practices of a particular society.⁶³

Contextual stories

Let us now move to stories which emerge out of interactive contexts or take such contexts as their settings. Herodotus presents explicitly a number of encounters and contexts in which such stories are told. He describes how the Scythian king Scyles came to a bad end for his participation in Bacchic rituals:

Now the Scythians reproach the Greeks for this Bacchic revelling, saying that it is not reasonable to set up a god who leads men to madness. So when Scyles had been initiated into the Bacchic rite, some one of the Borysthenites scoffed at the Scythians: 'You laugh at us, Scythians, because we play the Bacchant and the god possesses us; but now this deity has possessed your own king, so that he plays the Bacchant and is maddened by the god. If you will not believe me, follow me now and I will show him to you.' (4.79)⁶⁴

The Scythians duly observe Scyles and kill him, but the interesting detail, from our point of view, is the setting. This is a setting of encounters between Greeks and non-Greeks in which taunts and assertions of superiority play an important role.⁶⁵ The Scythians taunt the Greeks in such encounters over their Bacchic revelries and on this occasion a Borysthenite has found an opportunity to hit back by telling them about the actions of their own king. There are innumerable stories in Herodotus which can be seen as answers to questions and debates that took place in such encounters. These encounters provide the ideal context for many of the *bon mots* preserved in Herodotus' text; they are equivalents to the Borysthenite's attempt to score points against his Scythian interlocutors. Herodotus narrates how the Egyptians,

learning that all the Greek land is watered by rain, but not by river water like theirs, said that one day the Greeks would be let down by what they counted on, and miserably starve: meaning that, if heaven sends no rain for the Greeks and afflicts them with drought, the Greeks will be overtaken by famine, for there is no other source of water for them except Zeus alone. (2.13)⁶⁶

He also reports that '[the Persian] courses are few, the dainties that follow many, and not all served together. This is why the Persians say of Greeks that they rise from table still hungry, because not much dessert is set before them: were this too given to Greeks (the Persians say) they would never stop eating' (1.133).

Other stories are located in a context involving the exchange of information. Herodotus presents a visit of some Cyrenaeans to the Libyan oracle of Ammon, which also attracted a Greek clientele; during that visit, the Cyrenaeans come to converse with the local king Etearchus (who interestingly bears a Greek name) and in the course of discussion the geographic issue of the sources of the Nile is raised, as a result of which the local king comes to narrate a story he has heard in a different encounter in his court with members of a Libyan tribe (2.32). Places of international pilgrimage and conceivably other places of international encounters are places where stories were exchanged.

A different occasion of creating and narrating stories is in the context of diplomatic relationships between Greeks and non-Greeks. These relationships tend to focus on

the presence of Greek envoys and other visitors to the courts of non-Greek kings and potentates. Herodotus provides two interesting stories about relationships between Greek communities and the Egyptian pharaohs.

Moreover, Amasis dedicated offerings in Greece. He gave to Cyrene a gilt image of Athena and a painted picture of himself; to Athena of Lindos, two stone images and a marvellous linen breast-plate; and to Hera in Samos, two wooden statues of himself that were still standing in my time behind the doors in the great shrine. The offerings in Samos were dedicated because of the friendship between Amasis and Polycrates, son of Aeaces; what he gave to Lindos was not out of friendship for anyone, but because the temple of Athena in Lindos is said to have been founded by the daughters of Danaus, when they landed there in their flight from the sons of Egyptus. Such were Amasis' offerings. (2.182)⁶⁷

Herodotus states that the gifts of Amasis to the temple of Lindos were due to the fact that the temple was founded by the daughters of Danaus in their flight from Egypt.⁶⁸ How are we to interpret this statement? We should, I suggest, imagine an embassy from Lindos requesting gifts and donations, and justifying these requests on the basis of a Greek myth which established a cultic relationship between the sanctuary and Egypt; or perhaps we could assume that these gifts were the result of suggestions of some Greeks who served under the Pharaoh and used such a mythic narrative in order to justify the present. Whatever the case, what is important is how Greek myth is used in order to construct a relationship between Greeks and non-Greeks and to elicit benefits out of this relationship. The encounter between Seuthes and Xenophon that we examined above is an excellent illustration of this phenomenon, while also suggesting that the use of Greek myth as a means of intercultural communication is not Herodotus' fabrication.

It is in such a context that we should interpret another Herodotean story concerning the visit of a Greek embassy to Egypt. According to the story, an embassy from Elis visited the court of Pharaoh Psammis and, boasting about their organisation of the Olympic Games, enquired whether the Egyptians could think of a more just way of organizing the games. When the Egyptians found out that the Eleans allowed their own citizens to participate at the games, they criticized them for this:

For there is no way that you will not favour your own townfolk in the contest and wrong the stranger; if you wish in fact to make just rules and have come to Egypt for that reason, you should admit only strangers to the contest, and not Eleans. (2.160)⁶⁹

Herodotus presents the story as if the occasion of the Elean visit is to boast about the fair organization of the Olympic Games; it is perhaps easier to assume that we have here another case of a Greek embassy soliciting gifts and privileges. One can easily imagine, if one wishes to maintain the historicity of the story, that in the context of such a visit, the Egyptians enquired about the Olympic Games and in the course of discussion the Egyptians raised the issue of the unfair participation of the Eleans themselves in the games. It is of course possible that there is no historical kernel in this story and that the story is 'simply' a Greek construction which presents a

Greek discourse on justice and the organization of the Olympic Games. Even if this were the case, the first important thing to notice is how a Herodotean discourse on a Greek topic is presented in a non-Greek context and in a very favourable light for the non-Greek side; this fact clearly shows how limiting is the usual way in which the discourse of alterity is presented as a mere polarity. The second important thing to notice is that the historical context in which such an exchange is presented as taking place is entirely plausible and has its real historical counterparts. In other words, the visits of Greeks to non-Greek courts in a variety of capacities are clearly occasions on which stories were exchanged and created to foment links and relationships.

Stories of the feats of Greeks in non-Greek courts, and of the deeds they accomplished while serving non-Greek monarchs, circulated widely in antiquity. Herodotus reports a famous story of Thales' engineering services to Croesus, although he does not believe it personally (1.75). There were many such individuals who returned to their places of origin after serving a foreign king and they must have been among the most important sources for the transmission and generation of stories. A few years ago a sixth-century Egyptian basalt statue was found at Priene in Asia Minor; it was dedicated by Pedon, who proudly recorded that he had served under Pharaoh Psammetichus II and was rewarded by the Pharaoh for his excellence with a golden bracelet and a city.⁷⁰ Pedon must have related many stories when asked about his exploits and adventures in Egypt and it is stories like these which ultimately found their way into Herodotus' narrative.

Other stories put the emphasis less on services rendered to the kings and more on the individual Greek, the setting of the barbarian court, or the character of the barbarian monarch, like that of Alcmeon's visit to the court of Croesus (6.125). This is a story which uses very efficiently the image of the fabulous wealth of Oriental kings in order to draw a vivid image of the setting of an Oriental court. Similar stories move on to depict in more detail an aspect of Oriental courts that proved irresistibly appealing to Greek imagination: the Oriental harem, both deeply fascinating and deeply abhorrent.⁷¹ The story of how Democedes of Croton, another Greek in the service of an Oriental monarch, was rewarded by Darius for healing his injury takes the opportunity to depict the harem:

After this, Darius rewarded him with a gift of two pairs of golden fetters. 'Is it your purpose,' Democedes asked, 'to double my pains for making you well?' Pleased by the retort, Darius sent him to his own wives. The eunuchs who conducted him told the women that this was the man who had given the king his life back. Each of them took a bowl and dipped it in a chest full of gold, so richly rewarding Democedes that the servant accompanying him, whose name was Sciton, collected a very great sum of gold by picking up the staters that fell from the bowls. (3.130)⁷²

This was a topic that generated innumerable stories, and became one of the central themes of the *Persian History* of Ctesias, another Greek doctor who, according to his own account, had served at the Persian court and was thus in an excellent position to provide a Greek audience with such titillating stories.⁷³

The story of Democedes shows that such visits and services could provide the setting for many stories which need not be historically true, but which can take a

variety of different forms and express a variety of different attitudes. The stories of the visits of Greek wise men to the courts of non-Greek kings adopt precisely such a historicizing setting. These stories can express the superiority of Greek values like moderation or free speech in the face of Oriental luxury and tyranny, as dramatized in the encounter between Solon and Croesus (1.29-33). They can be used to portray a clever and successful ploy or proposal by a Greek wise man; the story of how Bias or Pittacus went to Sardis and convinced Croesus not to attack the islanders is a good example (1.27). They can be used to illustrate Greek wise men in search of foreign wisdom; the stories of Greek wise men visiting Amasis are the exact opposite to those featuring Croesus.⁷⁴ They can be used in order to portray external, non-Greek criticism of Greek cultural practices and values, as in the case of the Elean example we examined.

Conclusions

We can, I believe, now move to some generalizations and conclusions. The examples from the *Anabasis* and the other non-textual sources cited should be sufficient to show the complex process of intercultural communication that was taking place in the Mediterranean world, before and after the time of Herodotus. They also provide convincing parallels for the kind of stories presented in Herodotus' text. I have tried to sketch a general typology of the intercultural stories that can be found in Herodotus' text and the patterns of intercultural communication that mediated them. We are a long way from having a full-scale analysis of Herodotus from the perspective of intercultural communication; but I would like to finish by emphasizing four important aspects of this complex phenomenon.

1. The first is the necessity of recognizing different forms of compatibility and comprehension that take place in intercultural communication. The Memphite stelae for Greek and Carian immigrants illustrate one possibility; the artists that made them were cognisant of both the Egyptian and the Greek/Carian style of a funerary stele, but they merely juxtaposed the one next to the other. There must have been many people involved in these networks and processes who were able to think in both cultural modes and address Egyptians in Egyptian and Greeks in Greek. Some of the most peculiar stories in Herodotus must have been the result of mediators who were able to address a Greek in a Greek mode of thinking. But it is also possible that instead of juxtaposing two modes, one can make them compatible. One of the most nefarious results of the alterity approach initiated by Hartog is its negation of agency to non-Greeks; the Greek stories about non-Greeks merely reflect what the Greeks wanted to say about themselves. But it is also possible that what the Greeks found interesting in those stories was compatible with the way non-Greeks wanted to present themselves. The famous story of Hecataeus and the Theban priests, who ridiculed his claim to be descended from gods in the sixteenth generation by showing him 345 statues of successive former priests (2.143), is a characteristic example superbly analysed by Ian Moyer.⁷⁵ The ossified culture of Egypt, in which 345 generations of priests had succeeded father to son, could be seen as a typical example of how Greeks

like Hecataeus and Herodotus perceived Egyptian alterity and contrasted it with Greek culture; a similar approach can be found in Plato's comments on Egyptian art.⁷⁶ But as Moyer has shown, this image of Egypt was one consciously created and maintained by contemporary Egyptians. An Egyptian discourse could therefore be compatible with a Greek one, and many Herodotean stories exemplify such a pattern.⁷⁷

2. My second point is that not all materials and means of intercultural communication had the same potency and circulation. We have seen many examples of the use of Greek myth as a means of intercultural communication: Seuthes and his Athenian mythic ancestors or Amasis and the Lindians. It is not always recognized how peculiar Greek mythology was in the ancient Mediterranean and how easily it led itself to be used as such a means. Greek mythology, and in particular its peculiar heroic component, is unique in being located in space and time; the movements of Greek heroes in space and time link communities and individuals, found settlements, instigate feuds.⁷⁸ There is nothing equivalent in the Mesopotamian or Egyptian mythologies, which are the only ones where we have sufficient evidence to judge. This power of Greek myth in creating a Mediterranean-wide mental landscape and in mediating intercultural communication is a major reason why it was adopted and adapted by non-Greek communities from Etruria to Lycia already during the archaic period.⁷⁹

But there is another aspect of Greek myth which is equally important. This is its ability to incorporate local traditions through selective filtering as well as the opportunity it offers to non-Greek cultures to present their traditions to a wider, Mediterranean-wide audience. Herodotus alludes at various places to the myth of Io and her sojourn to Egypt (1.1-5, 2.41). Greek myth tells the story of how Zeus fell in love with Io, how Io attracted the wrath of Hera and how Zeus had to transform Io into a cow to escape Hera's wrath. But Hera sent a gadfly to sting and persecute Io, who then roamed all over the world till she reached Egypt, where she gave birth to Epaphus.⁸⁰ This is no doubt a Greek myth, which seemed to have more than one version;⁸¹ but it is also clear that a Greek myth of a woman turned into a cow is linked here to the Egyptian tradition of Isis depicted as a cow and to Apis, an important deity of Memphis, where Greek presence was strong, depicted as a calf and with a name sounding similar to that of Greek Epaphus. The Greek mythic tradition has brought Io to Egypt and then identified her through translation with Egyptian traditions about Isis and Apis. It seems that when the world of mobility and empire brought Greeks to Egypt as mercenaries, traders and pilgrims, they identified one of their own mythical figures with a local one and located Io's sojourn in Egypt. Greek myth, because of its location in space and time, was in a position to link with a local myth and incorporate it as part of a Greek mythical narrative. Because Greek myth was located in space, it lent itself easily to adoption and adaption by non-Greek people, who already existed in it and often in very admirable roles; it is no surprise that Lycians were willing to adopt a famous Greek hero like Bellerophon, whose sojourns and travails Greek myth had located in Lycia. There are innumerable such cases in Herodotus;⁸² but the wider desideratum is a large-scale study of the use of Greek myth in intercultural communication in the ancient Mediterranean.

3. If Greek myth had a privileged position in Mediterranean intercultural

communication, the same applies to the imperial powers which shaped the Eastern Mediterranean world in the Archaic and Classical periods. From Assyria, Egypt and Lydia to Achaemenid Persia, the imperial rulers and their courts exercised an enormous role not only in the lives of their subjects and enemies, but also in their imaginations and conversations. In the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, countless stories circulated about these kings and their courts. Of significance is the emergence of complex literary narratives which used these rulers and their courts as settings for the most various projects.⁸³ Unfortunately, with two major exceptions, the vast majority of these texts have been lost. The two major exceptions are Greek literary texts and those Jewish texts that survived because they became part of the Bible.⁸⁴ Otherwise, we have only fragmentary glimpses of this extensive literature, like the famous text of Ahiqar, preserved in an Aramaic papyrus found in Elephantine in Egypt.⁸⁵

It would be instructive to compare a Herodotean story with the texts of the Bible. The story of how Darius enquired about the diversity of human customs by asking the Indians present in his court to bury their dead fathers and the Greeks to eat theirs is justly famous (3.38).⁸⁶ I Esdras has a parallel story in which three bodyguards attempt to convince Darius on what is the strongest thing, with the Jewish bodyguard Zerubbabel winning in convincing Darius that the strongest thing is truth (3–4). The authorial aims of these two stories could not be more different: Herodotus is using it in order to argue the relativity of human customs, while the author of I Esdras aims to glorify his religion and uses the story as a means through which Darius is convinced to allow the erection of the Temple.⁸⁷ But in both cases there is a common theme of the Persian court as an arena of enquiry. The story of Ahiqar is built around the theme of the wise courtier who is unfairly condemned, but who secretly escapes execution only to be vindicated afterwards; Stephanie West has rightly recognized the same theme in the story of Cambyses and his decision to execute Croesus (3.36).⁸⁸ But while in Ahiqar the travails of the hero largely provide a setting for the didactic part of the text, in Herodotus the same motif has been used in order to portray the mad tyrant that Cambyses 'was'. We need to recognize the international character of these motifs and settings and the complex role they played in articulating the most different stories. Alterity and polarity are very limiting interpretative tools here; the same applies to the Hellenocentric myopia which has examined such Herodotean stories outside their wider context of intercultural communication.⁸⁹ Imperial rulers and their courts functioned as a means of intercultural communication in the most variable ways.

4. My final point is to stress that these two factors (the popularity of Greek myth and the imaginary potency of imperial rulers) were by no means unrelated. Many years ago, David Lewis observed that the presence of Greeks under the service of the Persian king and his satraps played a significant role in the formulation of Greco-Persian diplomatic relationships:

It is to people of this kind that we have to look when we are considering the availability to the Persians of knowledge of Greek institutions and psychology, and they should certainly be thought of when we come to the detailed working out of diplomatic documents.⁹⁰

These Greeks did not merely conduct negotiations or formulate diplomatic documents. There are good reasons to believe that they were instrumental in creating stories that allowed the Persians to comprehend the nature and views of their Greek subjects, opponents and allies and to intervene in Greek affairs for their own benefit. We have already seen how Greeks could use mythology and genealogy in order to connect to non-Greeks and accrue benefits out of such links; but the process could work the other way round, as some stories in Herodotus manifest. Thus, Herodotus reports one of the stories that circulated in order to explain why the Argives did not participate in the pan-Hellenic campaign against the Persians: Xerxes sent a herald to the Argives, who claimed that since the Persians originated from Perses, who was the son of the Argive Perseus, the kinship between the two people should prevent them from fighting each other; the argument apparently convinced the Argives (7.150). Mythological stories that linked together Greeks and barbarians could originate from a non-Greek initiative, although it is rather likely that this non-Greek initiative was formulated and expressed through Greek brokers.⁹¹ The complexity of intercultural communication in antiquity and its importance for understanding Greek ethnography and Herodotus are truly fascinating issues; it is only to be hoped that future research will devote more attention to this area.

Notes

- 1 Hartog (1988); for the French intellectual background, see Leonard (2005). I would like to thank Elton Barker, Erich Gruen, Johannes Haubold, Kyriaki Konstantinidou, Ian Moyer, Isabelle Torrance and the editors for their invaluable comments and bibliographic suggestions. They are obviously not responsible for the views expressed here.
- 2 Hartog (1988: 3–11).
- 3 Cf. Pelling (1997).
- 4 Fehling (1989).
- 5 Fehling (1989: 49–77).
- 6 Skinner (2012). As Skinner shows, Greek ethnography as a textual genre is predicated on the widespread practice of ethnography, defined as ‘thinking about culture from the point of view of the outsider’, from thousands of Greeks and non-Greeks during the archaic and classical periods.
- 7 Vlassopoulos (2013).
- 8 See, e.g. Boedeker (2000).
- 9 Vittmann (2003: 155–79, 194–235).
- 10 Masson (1978).
- 11 Kammerzell (1993).
- 12 Gallo and Masson (1993).
- 13 See Bābler (1997: 94–7); Lauffer (1955–6: 200–4); Mitchell (2010: 95–7).
- 14 *IG II² 10051*: Ἀτώτας μεταλλεύς. || Πόντου ἀπ’ Εὐεξείνου Παφλαγῶν
μεγάθυμος Ἀτώτας || ἥς γαίᾳς τηλοῦ σῶμ’ ἀνέπαυσε πόνων || τέχνη
δ’ οὐτις ἔριξε· Πυλαίμενεος δ’ ἀπὸ ῥίζης || εἴμ’, ὃς Ἀχιλλῆος χειρὶ δαμείς
ἔθανεν.

- 15 I assume that the epitaph was composed by Atotas himself, or at least with his collaboration; see also the commentary of Raffeiner (1977: 14–16, 87–8).
- 16 See the articles in Lane Fox (2004a).
- 17 See also Harman's contribution to this volume, who deals with the same passage.
- 18 Lane Fox (2004b: 204); Ma (2004: 336–7).
- 19 Rood (2004). The charges brought against Xenophon for treason might be relevant to why he presents himself adopting pan-Hellenic discourse here.
- 20 See again Harman's contribution to this volume.
- 21 ἐπὶ τοῦτοις ὁρῶν ὁ Μυσοῦς ἐκπεπληγμένους αὐτοὺς, πείσας τῶν Ἀρκάδων τινὰ πεπαμένον ὀρχηστρίδα εἰσάγει σκευάσας ὡς ἐδύνατο κάλλιστα καὶ ἀσπίδα δούς κούφην αὐτῇ. ἡ δὲ ὠρχήσατο πυρρίχην ἐλαφρῶς. ἐνταῦθα κρότος ἦν πολὺς, καὶ οἱ Παφλαγόνες ἤροντο εἰ καὶ γυναῖκες συνεμάχοντο αὐτοῖς. οἱ δ' ἔλεγον ὅτι αὐταὶ καὶ αἱ τρεψάμεναι εἶεν βασιλέα ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου. τῇ μὲν νυκτὶ ταύτῃ τοῦτο τὸτέλος ἐγένετο.
- 22 Stronk (1995).
- 23 Ἀκούσας ταῦτα ὁ Σεύθης εἶπεν ὅτι οὐδενὶ ἂν ἀπιστήσειεν Ἀθηναίων...καὶ γὰρ ὅτι συγγενεῖς εἶεν εἰδέναι καὶ φίλους εὖνους ἔφη νομίζειν.
- 24 Fitzpatrick (2001).
- 25 2.29.3; it seems that a significant factor in the transformation of Tereus into a Thracian was the phonetic similarity of his name with that of Teres, who was the founder of the Odrysian kingdom of Thrace around the middle of the fifth century.
- 26 For example, Hall (1989); see also Hall (2006).
- 27 Erskine (2005); Gehrke (2005); Gruen (2011).
- 28 Hall (1989: 104–5).
- 29 *Anabasis*, 7.6.8–9.
- 30 *Anabasis*, 7.3.22–25.
- 31 This is not to deny complex triangulations when more than two traditions are involved; some examples of such complexity are examined below.
- 32 Herodotus, though, protests against this tendency precisely because *nomos* is king: given the universal disagreement, it is best just to respect other people's customs.
- 33 Munson (2001: 144–6).
- 34 Καίτοι ἐώθασι Ἕλληνες, ὡς πυνθάνομαι, ἀβουλότατα πολέμους ἴστασθαι ὑπὸ τε ἀγνωμοσύνης καὶ σκαιότητος· ἐπεὰν γὰρ ἀλλήλοισι πόλεμον προείπωσι, ἐξευρόντες τὸ κάλλιστον χωρίον καὶ λειότατον, ἐς τοῦτο κατιόντες μάχονται, ὥστε σὺν κακῷ μεγάλῳ οἱ νικῶντες ἀπαλλάσσονται· περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐσσομένων οὐδὲ λέγω ἀρχήν· ἐξώλεες γὰρ δὴ γίνονται. Τοὺς χρῆν, ἐόντας ὁμογλώσσους, κήρυξι τε διαχρεωμένους καὶ ἀγγέλοισι καταλαμβάνειν τὰς διαφορὰς καὶ παντὶ μάλλον ἢ μάχησι· εἰ δὲ πάντως ἔδεε πολεμέειν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἐξευρίσκειν χρῆν τῇ ἐκάτεροί εἰσι δυσχειρωτότατοι καὶ ταύτῃ πειρᾶν. Τρόπῳ τοίνυν οὐ χρηστῷ Ἕλληνες διαχρεώμενοι
- 35 See also 1.153.
- 36 Gruen (2011).
- 37 Ψαμμήτιχος δὲ πυθόμενος ἐδῶκε· ὡς δὲ κατέλαβε, ἐδέετο πολλὰ λέγων καὶ σφεας θεοὺς πατρώιους ἀπολιπεῖν οὐκ ἔα καὶ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας· τῶν δὲ τίνα λέγεται δεῖξαντα τὸ αἰδοῖον εἰπεῖν, ἐνθα ἂν τοῦτο ἦ, ἔσεσθαι αὐτοῖσι ἐνθαῦτα καὶ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας.

- 38 But see Lloyd (1976: 129).
- 39 Genitals here, or farting as a sign of contempt in 2.162.
- 40 There are notable similarities here with 2.30.4.
- 41 West (1999).
- 42 Hansen (2002: 62–6); Müller (2006: 309–35).
- 43 Ryholt (2006: 31–58).
- 44 Aly (1921: 66, 255).
- 45 I do not have the space here to discuss whether an Egyptian or Persian could indeed have narrated such a story and whether these stories have a non-Greek origin or are merely Greek stories with Greek values attributed to non-Greeks.
- 46 Simpson (2003: 450–2).
- 47 Lloyd (1988: 213–14); Quaegebeur (1990).
- 48 Compare also 3.14 with Aly (1921: 81–2).
- 49 For the cultic connections of the Greek myth, see Dubois (1996: 61).
- 50 Ὡς δὲ Σκύθαι λέγουσι, νεώτατον ἀπάντων ἔθνέων εἶναι τὸ σφέτερον, τοῦτο δὲ γενέσθαι ὤδε. Ἄνδρα γενέσθαι πρῶτον ἐν τῇ γῇ ταύτῃ ἐοῦση ἐρήμῳ τῷ οὐνομα εἶναι Ταργίταον· τοῦ δὲ Ταργίταου τούτου τοὺς τοκέας λέγουσι εἶναι... Δία τε καὶ Βορυσθένης τοῦ ποταμοῦ θυγατέρα. Γένεος μὲν τοιούτου δὴ τινος γενέσθαι τὸν Ταργίταον, τούτου δὲ γενέσθαι παῖδας τρεῖς, Λιπόξαϊν καὶ Ἀρπόξαϊν καὶ νεώτατον Κολάξαϊν. Ἐπὶ τούτων ἀρχόντων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ φερόμενα χρύσεια ποιήματα, ἀροστρὸν τε καὶ ζυγὸν καὶ σάγαριν καὶ φιάλην, πεσεῖν ἐς τὴν Σκυθικὴν, καὶ τῶν ἰδόντα πρῶτον τὸν πρεσβύτατον ἄσπον ἰέναι βουλόμενον αὐτὰ λαβεῖν, τὸν δὲ χρυσὸν ἐπιόντος καίεσθαι. Ἀπαλλαχθέντος δὲ τούτου προσιέναι τὸν δεύτερον, καὶ τὸν αὖτις ταῦτα ποιέειν. Τοὺς μὲν δὴ καιόμενον τὸν χρυσὸν ἀπώσασθαι, τρίτῳ δὲ τῷ νεωτάτῳ ἐπελθόντι κατασβῆναι, καὶ μὴν ἐκεῖνον κομίσει ἐς ἑωυτοῦ· καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἀδελφεοὺς πρὸς ταῦτα συγγνόντας τὴν βασιληίην πᾶσαν παραδοῦναι τῷ νεωτάτῳ.
- 51 Dumezil (1978).
- 52 Ivantchik (1999b).
- 53 For example, that of King Meles of Sardis and the lion (1.84).
- 54 For example, that of Croesus and the change of Lydian customs (1.155-6).
- 55 See Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010).
- 56 Lloyd (1988: 79).
- 57 West (1998).
- 58 Kammerzell (1987). This interesting phenomenon of communicative complexity is not restricted to narrative. Peter Haider has impressively shown how Herodotus' confused description of Lake Moeris (2.149-50) is in effect a transposition in the form of a realistic geographical description of the theological geography of the Egyptian Book of the Fayum: Haider (2001).
- 59 Flower (1991).
- 60 Lloyd (1988: 104–5).
- 61 Spiegelberg (1927: 24).
- 62 Gyges was a figure who attracted both Greek and non-Greek stories: see Burkert (2004).
- 63 Kindstrand (1981).
- 64 Σκύθαι δὲ τοῦ βακχεύειν πέρι Ἑλλησι ὀνειδίζουσι· οὐ γὰρ φασὶ οἰκὸς εἶναι θεὸν ἐξευρίσκειν τοῦτον ὅστις μαίνεσθαι ἐνάγει ἀνθρώπους. Ἐπεῖτε δὲ ἐτελέσθη τῷ Βακχείῳ ὁ Σκύλης, διεπρήστευσε τῶν τις

Βορυσθενεϊτέων πρὸς τοὺς Σκύθας λέγων “Ἡμῖν γὰρ καταγελᾶτε, ὦ Σκύθαι, ὅτι βακχεύομεν καὶ ἡμέας ὁ θεὸς λαμβάνει· νῦν οὗτος ὁ δαίμων καὶ τὸν ὑμέτερον βασιλέα λελάβηκε, καὶ βακχεύει τε καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μαίνεται. Εἰ δέ μοι ἀπιστέετε, ἔπεσθε, καὶ ὑμῖν ἐγὼ δείξω”.

- 65 Braund (2008).
- 66 Πυθόμενοι γὰρ ὥς ἔεται πᾶσα ἡ χώρα τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἀλλ’ οὐ ποταμοῖσι ἄρδεται κατὰ περὶ ἡ σφετέρῃ, ἔφασαν Ἕλληνας ψευσθέντας κοτὲ ἐλπίδος μεγάλης κακῶς πεινήσειν. Τὸ δὲ ἔπος τοῦτο ἐθέλει λέγειν ὥς, εἰ μὴ ἐθέλῃσι σφί ὕειν ὁ θεὸς ἀλλ’ αὐχμῶ διαχρᾶσθαι, λιμῶ οἱ Ἕλληνες αἰρεθήσονται· οὐ γὰρ δὴ σφί ἔστι ὕδατος οὐδεμία ἄλλη ἀποστροφὴ ὅτι μὴ ἐκ τοῦ Διὸς μῶνον.
- 67 Ἀνέθηκε δὲ καὶ ἀναθήματα ὁ Ἀμασις ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, τοῦτο μὲν ἐς Κυρήνην ἀγαλμα ἐπίχρυσον Ἀθηναίης καὶ εἰκόνα ἑωυτοῦ γραφῇ εἰκασμένην, τοῦτο δὲ τῇ ἐν Λίνδῳ Ἀθηναίῃ δύο τε ἀγάλματα λίθινα καὶ θώρηκα λίνεον ἀξιοθέητον, τοῦτο δ’ ἐς Σάμον τῇ Ἥρῃ εἰκόνας ἑωυτοῦ διφασίας ξυλίνας, αἱ ἐν τῷ νηῶ τῷ μεγάλῳ ἰδρύατο ἔτι καὶ τὸ μέχρις ἐμέο, ὅπισθε τῶν θυρέων. Ἐς μὲν νυν Σάμον ἀνέθηκε κατὰ ξεινίην τὴν ἑωυτοῦ τε καὶ Πολυκράτεος τοῦ Αἰάκεος, ἐς δὲ Λίνδον ξεινίης μὲν οὐδεμιῆς εἵνεκεν, ὅτι δὲ τὸ ἱρὸν τὸ ἐν Λίνδῳ τὸ τῆς Ἀθηναίης λέγεται τὰς <τοῦ> Δαναοῦ θυγατέρας ἰδρύσασθαι, προσσχούσας ὅτε ἀπεδίδρησκον τοὺς Αἰγύπτου παιδας. Ταῦτα μὲν ἀνέθηκε ὁ Ἀμασις.
- 68 Francis and Vickers (1984).
- 69 οὐδεμίαν γὰρ εἶναι μηχανὴν ὅπως οὐ τῷ ἀστῶ ἀγωνιζομένῳ προσθήσονται, ἀδικέοντες τὸν ξεῖνον. ἀλλ’ εἰ δὴ βούλονται δικαίως τιθέναι καὶ τούτου εἵνεκα ἀπικοίατο ἐς Αἴγυπτον, ξεινοῖσι ἀγωνιστήσι ἐκέλευον τὸν ἀγῶνα τιθέναι, Ἡλείων δὲ μηδενὶ εἶναι ἀγωνίζεσθαι.
- 70 SEG XXXVII 994; Masson and Yoyotte (1988).
- 71 Harrison (2000).
- 72 On the tales of Democedes, see Griffiths (1987); Davies (2010).
- 73 On the veracity of Ctesias’ presence in the Persian court, see Dorati (1995); on his court tales, see Llewellyn-Jones and Robson (2010).
- 74 Müller (2006: 189–224).
- 75 Moyer (2002).
- 76 *Laws*, 656d–657a; Davis (1979).
- 77 For a similar reading of the story of the Scythian youths and the Amazons (4.110–16), see Ivantchik (1999a: 504).
- 78 Scheer (1993). Hebrew stories, such as Genesis 10, show a similar ability to create mythic genealogies linking various people together.
- 79 Malkin (1998).
- 80 Hicks (1962: 93–7); West (1984).
- 81 Mitchell (2001).
- 82 Nesselrath (1996; 1999).
- 83 Dalley (2001).
- 84 Wills (1990); Johnston (2004).
- 85 Fales (1993; 1994); Luzzato (1992; 1994).
- 86 Christ (1994).
- 87 Gruen (1998: 161–7).
- 88 West (2003).
- 89 The attitude of Christ (1994) is typical.

- 90 Lewis (1977: 14–15).
- 91 In fact, in a recent brilliant article, Johannes Haubold has argued that the use of the Trojan War as a mythological exemplum through which to understand the Persian Wars and the opposition between Greeks and barbarians is likely to be a Persian invention to justify their invasion, which was subsequently taken over and reversed by the victorious Greeks! See Haubold (2007).

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Part 2

Responses

Looking at the Other: Visual Mediation and Greek Identity in Xenophon's *Anabasis*

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Xenophon's *Anabasis* describes the experience of being Greek in a strange land.¹ In telling the story of the travels through Asia Minor in 401–399 BC of an army of 10,000 Greeks (the Ten Thousand), among whom Xenophon himself numbered, following their employment under the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger, it stages a series of encounters with both Greek and non-Greek peoples. Identity is a major concern of the *Anabasis*. Claims about the differences between Greeks and non-Greeks occur throughout the text: Cyrus tells his Greek troops that they are superior to his barbarian troops (νομίζων ἀμείνονας καὶ κρείττους πολλῶν βαρβάρων ὑμᾶς εἶναι, 1.7.3), for example.² One reader has described Cyrus' statement as 'auto-ethnography', arguing that the placing of such an assertion in the mouth of a barbarian gives that assertion extra authority.³ He reads the *Anabasis* as a call for Greek unity against Persia, in the light of contemporary pan-Hellenist thought⁴ – the calls for an end to internal Greek conflict and for collective Greek action against Persia which began to appear around this time, especially in the writings of Isocrates.⁵

However, as this example illustrates, the text's appeals to Greek superiority and shared identity appear in the speeches of internal characters and not in authorial interventions.⁶ They are also not supported by the narrative context: the *Anabasis* frequently depicts antagonism between Greeks, both in the Ten Thousand's encounters with the Greek colonists on the Black Sea coast and among the ranks of the Ten Thousand themselves. The various state and regional affiliations of the Ten Thousand, frequently shown in conflict with each other, disrupt a simple categorisation of the army as 'Greeks'.⁷ Indeed, a recent reading has argued that the text's representation of the geographical and cultural displacement of the Ten Thousand suggests the dislocation of Greek identity.⁸

In this chapter I approach the problem of identities in the *Anabasis* by considering the text's many scenes of visual response.⁹ Viewing is a useful heuristic tool through which to examine the nature of the *Anabasis* as ethnography: recent work in film and cultural studies has discussed how the act of viewing constructs relations of power and identity. Following feminist theorists of film of the 1970s and 1980s, who posited

the construction of male power through the 'male gaze' at the objectified female body,¹⁰ studies of the representation of racial and colonial relations have described the operation of an 'imperial' or 'ethnographic gaze' in formulating the power of white viewers over black or colonized people as objects of sight.¹¹ However, importantly, these studies have also emphasized the variety of configurations of power possible in visual relationships, showing how political positioning is produced in the viewer's *response* to a sight, and therefore can shift or be challenged. Viewing can place the viewer in a position of dominance and security, but it can also be a destabilizing experience.

Such issues are particularly pertinent to the *Anabasis*. The description of the visual is important in Classical Greek historiographical discourse: both Herodotus and Thucydides present the reading experience as visual experience, and offset the view of events offered to their readers by the authorial persona with descriptions of the viewing experiences of internal characters, as a means of historical analysis.¹² In the *Anabasis*, the story of the travels of the Greek army through Asia Minor is told through a series of visual encounters with native peoples and landscapes. By considering the nature of the visual experience of the Ten Thousand, and the relationships both among the Ten Thousand and between Greeks and native groups and places constructed in the act of viewing, I consider how the reader is positioned in relation both to foreigners and to the Greeks themselves. The mediation of the reader's experience through that of the text's Greek protagonists might encourage identification with the Ten Thousand; but how easily is such identification made? What sort of experience of being Greek does it offer? And how is it affected by the depiction of foreign responses to the sight of the Ten Thousand? Is reading about Greek travel in Asia an affirmative, essentially comfortable act, or does it offer a more challenging experience? As we shall see, the visual experiences of the text are not monolithic: we are offered a variety of modes of viewing, from gazing to observation and scrutiny, from different vantage points, with very different political effects. I will argue that Xenophon's portrayal of these varied visual interactions has much to tell us about Greek self-consciousness in the early fourth century, by offering an experience of Greekness which is complex and conflicted. While the *Anabasis* must be read in the context of contemporary pan-Hellenist thought, offering in the story of the Ten Thousand a test case for how a unified Greek identity might function, it also reveals the limitations of such a valuation of Greekness by presenting the tendency of Greek identity to fracture into its constituent parts or be manipulated for political ends.

Greek views of the foreign

What sort of experience of Asia do the Ten Thousand's visual encounters with their foreign environment offer the reader? Their viewing is frequently assertive, placing the Ten Thousand in a position of power as they confidently survey the land and peoples before them. Sight becomes paradigmatic of exploration and conquest; the eye of the Greeks scanning the unfamiliar landscape is often presented as explicitly acquisitive.¹³

Encouraging the men to consider the opportunities with which hostilities with the Persians provide them, Xenophon describes himself (3.1.19)

gazing upon the extent and quality of the land they possessed, and at what an abundance of provisions and what quantities of servants, cattle, gold and clothing they owned.

διαθεώμενος αὐτῶν ὅσῃ μὲν χώραν καὶ οἶαν ἔχοιεν, ὥς δὲ ἄφθονα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια, ὅσους δὲ θεράποντας, ὅσα δὲ κτήνη, χρυσὸν δέ, ἐσθῆτα δέ.¹⁴

Such self-confident, self-validating Greek viewing also occurs in the famous scene of the sight of the Black Sea (4.7.20-6). The Ten Thousand are led by a local guide to a mountain-top from which they will be able to see the sea (ὄψονται θάλατταν, 4.7.20). Their viewing is celebratory: 'When those at the front reached the top of the mountain and saw the sea, a great shout went up' (ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους καὶ κατείδον τὴν θάλατταν, κραυγὴ πολλὴ ἐγένετο, 4.7.21). The sight signifies the end of their journey in unknown, foreign lands, and their imminent arrival on the borders of the Greek world, the Greek cities of the Black Sea coast.

A striking element of the description is the level of confusion among those in the Greek army who have not yet seen the view; they do not know why the men ahead of them are shouting and fear that they are being attacked (4.7.22). The revelation of the view stems this confusion, producing certainty and self-assertion in the building of a trophy (κολωνόν, 4.7.25).¹⁵ It is a moment of self-validation, and also of social cohesion, as men of all ranks respond to the view with the same joy.

In their joyous viewing of the Black Sea, the Greeks invest the landscape with their own set of meanings: they do not 'just' see the sea, but see the edge of the Greek world. A specifically Greek way of seeing this landscape is indicated as the army passes by ship along the Black Sea coast. The Greeks gaze upon Jason's Cape (ἐθεώρουν τὴν τε Ἰασονίαν ἀκτὴν, 6.2.1), where it is said that the Argo moored (6.2.1), and stop at a point where it is said that Heracles descended into Hades to fetch Cerberus (6.2.2): signs of his descent are on display (ἦ νῦν τὰ σημεῖα δεικνύασι τῆς καταβάσεως, 6.2.2).¹⁶ The Greeks look at and recognize signs which legitimate their presence, as they follow in the footsteps of legendary explorers who have come there before them. Their narrative of travel becomes incorporated into a tradition of Greek adventuring.

However, this confident, self-validating Greek experience only partly describes the Greeks' visual relationship with their foreign environment. Greek sight of the foreign is not always self-affirming, but can suggest, or produce, insecurity. The Ten Thousand's joy in seeing the Black Sea hints at their desperation; they see in the view not just success but salvation. Their sight can be an anxiety-laden viewing of difficulties (4.3.7):

Then great despondency fell upon the Greeks as they saw a river difficult to cross, as they saw troops ahead who would obstruct their crossing, and as they saw the Carduchians behind, ready to attack them if they tried to cross.

ἐνταῦθα δὴ πολλὴ ἀθυμία ἦν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν, ὁρῶσι μὲν τοῦ ποταμοῦ
τὴν δυσπορίαν, ὁρῶσι δὲ τοὺς διαβαίνειν κωλύσοντας, ὁρῶσι δὲ τοῖς
διαβαίνουσιν ἐπικεισομένους τοὺς Καρδούχους ὀπισθεν.

Often their viewing consists of a struggle to discern and interpret uncertain visual clues.¹⁷ This is illustrated in the Greeks' sighting of the Persian army before the Battle of Cunaxa (1.8.8):

Midday came and still there was no sign of the enemy. But early in the afternoon a cloud of dust appeared, looking at first like a white cloud in the sky. Some time later, however, it was as if there was a huge black smudge on the plain. Before long, as the enemy drew nearer, there were flashes of bronze, and then the tips of their spears and the divisions of the enemy became apparent (trans. Waterfield 2005).

καὶ ἤδη τε ἦν μέσον ἡμέρας καὶ οὐπω καταφανεῖς ἦσαν οἱ πολέμιοι·
ἡνίκα δὲ δέιλη ἐγίγνετο, ἐφάνη κονιορτὸς ὥσπερ νεφέλη λευκή, χρόνῳ
δὲ συχνῶ ὕστερον ὥσπερ μελανία τις ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ἐπὶ πολὺ. ὅτε δὲ
ἐγγύτερον ἐγίγνοντο, τάχα δὴ καὶ χαλκὸς τις ἦστραπτε καὶ λόγχοι καὶ
αἱ τάξεις καταφανεῖς ἐγίγνοντο.

The Greeks are not in control of this viewing; through the gradually unfolding sight, they struggle to make sense of an ambiguous and threatening environment.

The Greeks' visual experience of the foreign landscape can also be a matter of the detection and negotiation of obstacles and dangers. In a series of exchanges about what can be seen from their different positions between Xenophon, who commands the rearguard of the army, and Cheirisophus, who leads the van, looking is an urgent process of discovering what the enemy is doing, what the landscape is like, and therefore what the Greeks should do to survive (3.4.38-9; 4.1.17-20; 4.7.4-6). When Xenophon reproaches Cheirisophus for not waiting for the rear in their escape from the Carduchians, Cheirisophus responds (4.1.20):

'Look,' he said, 'at the mountains and see how impassable they all are. The only road is that steep one you can see, and it is possible to see on it a great crowd of people who have taken possession of it and are guarding our way out.'

Βλέψον, ἔφη, πρὸς τὰ ὄρη καὶ ἰδὲ ὡς ἄβατα πάντα ἐστὶ· μία δ' αὕτη
ὁδὸς ἦν ὁρᾶς ὀρθία, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ ἀνθρώπων ὄραν ἔξεστί σοι ὄχλον
τοσοῦτον, οἳ κατελιφότες φυλάττουσι τὴν ἔκβασιν.

Although the Greeks' viewing of their surroundings implies their self-reliance, as they see both dangers and how to overcome them, this is not a leisured or confident viewing. The reader's experience is mediated through the experiences of the text's viewers. Circumstances are explained not in an impersonal narrative but through descriptions of what the protagonists can see; we find out why Cheirisophus did not wait for him at the same moment that Xenophon does. In some ways their acts of viewing represent a unified, inclusive experience. Xenophon and Cheirisophus are in similar positions, negotiating their way through hostile terrain; at one point Xenophon describes what they can jointly see (ὁρῶμεν, 4.7.5). However, the

splitting of visual experience between the two characters, as one sees one thing and the other sees another, also emphasizes the partiality or incompleteness of the Greeks' experience.¹⁸ Along with the protagonists, the reader cannot see the bigger picture, and is presented with sights piecemeal. Although the Greeks are presented as resourceful opportunists, their viewing is also an uncomfortable, fragmented experience.

The problem of Greek visual response becomes more urgent when viewing is involved in the assertion, and policing, of Greek identity. When Xenophon argues that the Ten Thousand should make their escape back to Greece after Cunaxa, all the officers agree with him except a man called Apollonides, who speaks in the Boeotian dialect (βοιωτιάζων τῇ φωνῇ); he stresses the difficulty of their position and argues that they must gain the consent of the Persian king for their actions (3.1.26). His dissent from the general opinion is cast as a problem for the security of Greek identity, as Xenophon complains: 'This man is a disgrace to his homeland and indeed to the whole of Greece, because he is Greek yet of such a kind as this' (οὗτος γὰρ καὶ τὴν πατρίδα καταισχύνει καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ὅτι Ἕλληνας ὢν τοιοῦτός ἐστιν, 3.1.30). However, the sanctity of Greek identity is saved as one of the other officers announces (3.1.31):

But this man belongs neither to Boeotia nor to any other part of Greece, for I have seen that he has both ears pierced like a Lydian

Ἀλλὰ τοῦτω γε οὔτε τῆς Βοιωτίας προσήκει οὐδὲν οὔτε τῆς Ἑλλάδος παντάπασιν, ἐπεὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸν εἶδον ὥσπερ Λυδὸν ἀμφοτέρω τὰ ὦτα τετραπημένον.

This explanation is summarily accepted, and Apollonides is driven away. The sight of his ears speaks for itself, declaring his non-Greekness, and outweighs dialect as evidence of identity. Conversely, it is the other officers' role as inspectors and castigators of Apollonides' non-Greek body that positions them as Greek. However, this positioning is makeshift and expedient: there is no explanatory intervention from the narrator, clarifying whether Apollonides is really non-Greek.¹⁹ The conflict between the message conveyed by his accent and that communicated by his ears is not explained, leaving the reader with the suspicion that he has been conveniently scapegoated. Visual scrutiny provides not a determination of identity, but a means of justifying claims about identity made for political purposes.

Despite the problems involved in looking at the foreign, these examples all present the viewing of the Greeks as an active means of overcoming and managing their environment. Yet barbarians sometimes also actively control how they and their lands are seen. The hostile faction of Mossynoecians cut off the heads of those they kill and display them to the Greeks, performing a dance as they do so (5.4.17); the Greeks are distressed (μάλα ἤχθοντο, 5.4.18) at the sight of the enemy's display. The Chalybians also cut off the heads of their enemies, carrying them along with them as they march, and they dance and sing whenever they are likely to be seen by their enemies (ὅποτε οἱ πολέμιοι αὐτοὺς ὀψεσθαι ἔμελλον, 4.7.16). They are self-conscious about

their visual effect, manipulating their appearance to their advantage. Similarly, the Persian Tissaphernes invites the Greek commander Clearchus not just to look at the landscape, but to see in it the precariousness of his position (2.5.18):

Do you not behold these vast plains, which even now, when they are friendly, you cross only with great toil; and also these great mountains you have to pass, which we can occupy in advance and make impassable?

οὐ τοσαῦτα μὲν πεδιάς ἃ ὑμεῖς φίλια ὄντα σὺν πολλῷ πόνῳ διαπορεύεσθε, τοσαῦτα δὲ ὄρη ὁρᾶτε ὑμῖν ὄντα πορευτέα, ἃ ἡμῖν ἔξεστι προκαταλαβοῦσιν ἅπορα ὑμῖν παρῆχειν;

Rather than foreign lands lying passive beneath the gaze of the Greeks, here landscape is produced as a spectacle of Persian supremacy and Greek vulnerability. In his invitation to look, Tissaphernes attempts to foist onto Clearchus a way of seeing the environment which suits his own purposes; the attempt to control Clearchus' response to the sight becomes an assertion of power.

Greeks looking at Greeks

So far I have discussed how the *Anabasis* formulates the experience of being Greek through the representation of Greek viewing of barbarian lands and people. However, the problems involved in the Greek experience not only arise in the Greeks' interaction with their foreign environment, but intervene in the Greeks' relationship with each other. When members of the Ten Thousand look at each other, viewing can articulate the interdependency of the soldiers as a functioning unit. Xenophon warns, 'When the men in the battle line see their line break, they will immediately be discouraged' (καὶ εὐθὺς τοῦτο ἀθυμίαν ποιήσει ὅταν τεταγμένοι εἰς φάλαγγα ταύτην διεσπασμένην ὁρῶσιν, 4.8.10). Similarly, the men's sight of each other in confident preparation for battle implies their social cohesion, and precedes an efficient and successful attack (5.2.13):

the captains, lieutenants and those who considered themselves no worse than them in bravery all arranged themselves in the line and, moreover, looked at one another ...

οἱ λοχαγοὶ καὶ οἱ ὑπολόχαγοι καὶ οἱ ἀξιούντες τούτων μὴ χείρους εἶναι πάντες παρατεταγμένοι ἦσαν, καὶ ἀλλήλους μὲν δὴ ξυνεώρων ...

However, the sense of mutual identification suggested in these examples is frequently challenged; viewing among the Ten Thousand often highlights conflicts in the army on ethnic and class lines, and challenges the cohesion of the 'Greekness' of the Ten Thousand.

I begin with ethnicity. After the dissolution of the army into contingents organized by ethnic affiliation, Xenophon and his men come to the rescue of the Arcadians and Achaeans who are under siege on a hilltop. What Xenophon's contingent see is described in direct discourse; the Arcadians' sight of the same events is then presented

in indirect speech (ἔφασαν, 6.3.25). When Xenophon's men set up camp on a hilltop (6.3.20-1)

They could see the campfires of the enemy about 40 stades away, and kindled as many fires themselves as they could. But as soon as they had eaten, the order was given to extinguish all the fires.

τά τε τῶν πολεμίων πυρὰ ἐώρων, ἀπείχον δὲ ὡς τετταράκοντα σταδίου, καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς ἐδύναντο πλεῖστα πυρὰ ἔκαιον. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐδείπνησαν τάχιστα, παρηγγέλθη τὰ πυρὰ κατασβεννύναι πάντα.

In the morning they go to the hill where the Arcadians and Achaeans had been besieged. However, 'they could see no army, either friendly or hostile' (καὶ οὐχ ὁρῶσιν οὔτε φίλιον στράτευμα οὔτε πολέμιον, 6.3.22). The narrator describes their response: 'it was a wonder to them what had happened' (θαῦμα ἦν τί εἴη τὸ γεγενημένον, 6.3.23). Xenophon's men set out again, after seeing the tracks of the Arcadians and Achaeans in the road (6.3.24). When the two groups meet, they are overjoyed to see each other and embrace like brothers (ἄσμενοί τε εἶδον ἀλλήλους καὶ ἡσπάζοντο ὥσπερ ἀδελφούς, 6.3.24).

The interpretation of visual signs becomes a problem for the relationship between the contingents, as the Arcadians ask Xenophon's men why they extinguished the fires, and explain their reactions to the sight: 'We thought at first, when we could no longer see the fires, that you would come against the enemy during the night.' (ᾧμεθα ὑμᾶς τὸ μὲν πρῶτον, ἐπειδὴ τὰ πυρὰ οὐχ ἐώρωμεν, τῆς νυκτὸς ἥξειν ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους, 6.3.25). When Xenophon's men did not arrive, however, they reinterpreted the lights' disappearance to mean that Xenophon's men had learned of their predicament and had run away (6.3.26). This narrative takes place as a consequence of the army's rejection of a joint Greek identity in its division into ethnic factions. The confusion in the interpretation of sight in the relationship between the two Greek groups hints at this loss of identity; although they embrace like brothers (ὥσπερ ἀδελφούς, 6.3.24), the Greeks have become wondrously strange (θαῦμα, 6.3.23) to each other.

The reader is also involved in this confusion. It is not made clear if the dousing of the fires was an act of deliberate trickery, in order to manipulate the enemy through the use of deceptive visual signs; its result, that there was no army to be seen on the hillside, is a matter of wonder to Xenophon's men.²⁰ The reader, by being invited to see as the two Greek groups in turn are described as seeing, is potentially alienated from them both; his or her identification with the Ten Thousand as 'Greeks' is disrupted.

Another moment where viewing involves questions of ethnicity occurs when, on reaching Trapezus and re-entering the Greek world, the Ten Thousand hold sacrifices and games in thanks for their deliverance from barbarian lands. We are told it produced a beautiful spectacle (καλὴ θεὰ ἐγένετο, 4.8.27), and that there was much rivalry because the companions (or possibly camp followers) of the competitors were watching (ἅτε θεωμένων τῶν ἐταίρων πολλὴ φιλονικία ἐγίγνετο, 4.8.27).²¹ These games have been read as producing and confirming a unifying Greek identity through communal ceremony and action.²² However, the games contain

some incongruities: the majority of participants in the stadium race are boys from the Greeks' captives (ἡγωνίζοντο δὲ παῖδες μὲν στάδιον τῶν αἰχμαλώτων οἱ πλεῖστοι, 4.8.27); Cretans are apparently the sole participants of the long race (4.8.27); and the horse race takes place on a steep slope (4.8.28), a practice explicitly attributed to barbarians in Xenophon's *On Horsemanship*.²³ The incorporation of barbarians and barbarian customs into Greek ceremonial has been read as the recognition and celebration of the non-Greek.²⁴ Another reading sees the games as involved in the construction of Greek identity through 'the production of difference',²⁵ the categorization of participants by age, juridical status and ethnicity.

How do the games function as spectacle? The phrase καλή θέα (4.8.27) has been read as triumphalist: 'the ordered successful army holding athletic games is a thing of beauty'.²⁶ However, a few lines before this, Dracontius the Spartan exile, the organizer of the games, describes a hard and overgrown hillside as κάλλιστος τρέχειν, excellent for running (4.8.26). On being asked how the men will manage to wrestle on such ground, he replies that whoever is thrown will get hurt more (4.8.26). The joke is on Spartan hardness; what seems κάλλιστος to Dracontius does not seem so to his interlocutors, 'the Greeks', the subject of the passage's repeated third-person plurals (named in the nominative at 4.8.19: οἱ Ἕλληνες). This raises the question of focalization. To whom is the spectacle of the games καλή? The audience's raucous response of shouts, laughter and cheering (ἐνθα πολλή κραυγὴ καὶ γέλως καὶ παρακéléυσις ἐγίγνετο, 4.8.28), as horses roll down the slope, might demonstrate their collective appreciation of the spectacle, but it also indicates the confusion and diversity of heterogeneous voices. The spectacle could be understood as a simultaneously unifying and unsettling experience, which problematizes identities among the Ten Thousand.

Moments of viewing also involve the construction of class distinctions within the Ten Thousand. In the sacking of the Taochian stronghold (4.7.1-14), four Greek captains contend in bravery, watching each other and treating the army as an audience for their actions. Callimachus runs out to attract the attention of the enemy: 'When Agasias saw what Callimachus was doing, and that the whole army was watching, he became afraid that he might not be the first to make the run across to the stronghold' (ὁ δὲ Ἀγασίας ὡς ὄρᾳ τὸν Καλλίμαχον ἃ ἐποίει τὸ στράτευμα πᾶν θεώμενον, δέισας μὴ οὐ πρῶτος παραδράμῃ εἰς τὸ χωρίον, 4.7.11). The capture of the stronghold is told not as a joint achievement of the army as a whole but as the exploit of individuals. Self-conscious display is used to formulate the captains in heroic mould; the captains, the elite of the army, become the stars of the narrative, with the common soldiers treated as a passive audience whose responses go unmentioned.

A more specific form of class difference formulated through viewing is the relation between leader and men. Xenophon warns the Greek generals and captains to regulate their appearance before the eyes of their men in order to assert control (3.1.36):

All these soldiers are looking at you; if they see that you are faint-hearted, they will all be cowards; but if you are visible making preparations against the enemy and you call upon the others, know well that they will follow you and will attempt to imitate you.

οἱ γὰρ στρατιῶται οὗτοι πάντες πρὸς ὑμᾶς βλέπουσι, κὰν μὲν ὑμᾶς ὁρῶσιν ἀθύμους, πάντες κακοὶ ἔσονται, ἦν δὲ ὑμεῖς αὐτοὶ τε παρασκευαζόμενοι φανεροὶ ἦτε ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παρακαλῆτε, εὖ ἴστε ὅτι ἔψονται ὑμῖν καὶ πειράσονται μιμεῖσθαι.

When faced with criticism and resistance from his men, Xenophon draws attention to the visibility of his actions, and appropriates the viewing of his internal audience to reaffirm his power over them. At Calpe Harbour, for example, he invites the men to inspect his sacrifices (θεασόμενον, 6.4.15) and states that they have seen the results (ὡς ὁρᾶτε, 6.4.17) in order to prove that he has not faked them, as has been rumoured.²⁷ His appeals to what the men have seen are rhetorically coercive, allowing no rejoinder: since they have seen, he suggests, they must agree.

In these moments of conflict, the identity of the Ten Thousand as a cohesive, unified force breaks down. This problem is self-consciously addressed when claims about identity are used to affirm a leader's power. When the army refuses to follow Clearchus in the service of Cyrus, and stones him when he tries to force them on, Clearchus replaces force with display (1.3.2):

When he realized that he could not accomplish anything by force, he called a meeting of his own troops. First of all, he stood and wept for a long time. As they looked at him the men wondered and were silent.

ἐπεὶ ἔγνω ὅτι οὐ δυνήσεται βιάσασθαι, συνήγαγεν ἐκκλησίαν τῶν αὐτοῦ στρατιωτῶν. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἐδάκρυε πολὺν χρόνον ἐστῶς· οἱ δὲ ὁρῶντες ἐθαύμαζον καὶ ἐσιώπων·

Clearchus persuades them to obey him, tricking them into believing he has given up his plan to follow Cyrus by claiming that he would never betray Greeks to win the friendship of barbarians (καὶ οὐποτε ἐρεῖ οὐδεὶς ὡς ἐγὼ Ἕλληνας ἀγαγὼν εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους, προδοὺς τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων φιλίαν εἰλόμην..., 1.3.5). Clearchus sets himself up before the eyes of the men as a spectacle of Greekness. He re-establishes control by invoking their joint identity as Greeks, encouraging the men to identify with him as they watch him weep. The troops are won over by the display. Their solidarity with Clearchus affirms and constructs their unified identity – yet the construction of identities is based on deception and manipulation.

Other viewers

I have so far examined the Greeks' experience of viewing their foreign environment, and their experience of looking at each other. However, the Greeks are not the only viewers in the text; it is to the experiences of non-Greek viewers that I now turn. Descriptions of the viewing of barbarians often focus on their subjection to the Greeks' assertive display. The Ten Thousand disfigure enemy corpses, to create the most terrifying sight possible for the enemy (ὡς ὅτι φοβερώτατον τοῖς πολεμίοις εἶη ὁρᾶν, 3.4.5). They kill one hostage before the eyes of another (ὁρῶντος τοῦ ἐτέρου) in order to induce cooperation (4.1.23). When messengers arrive from the

Persian king, Clearchus arranges the army so that it should be an impressive sight from all sides (ὡς καλῶς ἔχειν ὁρᾶσθαι πάντη, 2.3.3), and comes forward with the best armed and best looking troops about him (2.3.3). Similarly, when the illegitimate brother of the Persian king watches (ἐθεώρει, 2.4.25) the Greeks as they pass by, Clearchus organizes the men so that they march two abreast and periodically halt; the effect is that the army seems very large, even to the Greeks themselves, and the Persian is astonished as he watches (τὸν Πέρσην ἐκπεπλήχθαι θεωροῦντα, 2.4.26). However, some portrayals of non-Greek viewing describe more complex responses; the introduction of alternative perspectives has an impact on the experience of the reader.

I begin with the spectatorship of the Paphlagonians. After inflicting much harm on Paphlagonia through pillage, the Ten Thousand entertain Paphlagonian ambassadors at dinner. They present displays of dances belonging to different ethnic groups making up their army, not all of whom are in fact Greek (6.1.5-13); dances are performed by Thracians, Aenianians, Magnesians, a Mysian (who also dances the Persian dance), Mantineans and other Arcadians. Emphasis is placed on reactions to the dances. We are told that the dance of the Mysian 'seemed a beautiful sight' (ὄψιν καλὴν φαίνεσθαι, 6.1.9), but are not told whose reaction this represents. No Greek responses to the dances are described, but the responses of the Paphlagonians are presented. They cry out (6.1.6) when the Thracian dancers imitate killing one another; the narrator continues: 'The Paphlagonians, as they looked on, thought it strange that all the dances were performed in arms' (ὁρῶντες δὲ οἱ Παφλαγόνες δεινὰ ἐποιοῦντο πάσας τὰς ὀρχήσεις ἐν ὅπλοις εἶναι, 6.1.11).

The Paphlagonian reaction is made the object of visual scrutiny. 'At this the Mysian, seeing how astounded they were, persuaded one of the Arcadians who owned a dancing girl to let him bring her in' (ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁρῶν ὁ Μυσοῦς ἐκπεπληγμένους αὐτούς, πείσας τῶν Ἀρκάδων τινὰ πεπαμένον ὀρχηστρίδα εἰσάγει, 6.1.12). The Mysian gives the dancing girl a shield and has her perform the Pyrrhic. The Paphlagonians' response to this display is to ask the Greeks whether their women fight alongside them (6.1.13).

This scene has been read as demonstrating the relativity of all cultural practices, by presenting the barbarian audience's bafflement at Greek customs.²⁸ Although useful in highlighting Greek exposure to barbarian eyes as potentially problematic, this reading does not take account of relations of power between the two groups. The Paphlagonians pose a threat to the Greeks – they have been kidnapping stragglers from the army (6.1.1). However, they have been doing this as a response to Greek pillaging of their territory; the Greeks entertain the Paphlagonians by sacrificing the Paphlagonians' own cattle which they had previously stolen from them (6.1.4). The Paphlagonians have come to the Greeks in order to sue for peace; the decision about whether to make an alliance is put off until after the banquet. The display becomes a site for the contestation of power. In the armed dances, the army present themselves to the ambassadors as warlike and violent; the dances could be interpreted as a warning to these spectators who are still at this moment their enemies.²⁹

The display highlights the army's ethnic diversity. The dances presented by the different groups are similar in that they are armed, but are very different in the way they

are acted out and in the stories that they tell; and they include a Mysian dancing the Persian dance, and a female slave dancing the Pyrrhic. In response to the Paphlagonian question about whether the women accompanying the Ten Thousand fight alongside them, the Greeks reply that it was these very women who put the Persian king to flight from his camp (6.1.13). Xenophon does not say how the Paphlagonians react to the Greek reply. Do they take it as a joke? Do they realize they are being duped? The evidence of vase painting informs us that women did dance the Pyrrhic in Greece (although it is unclear in what contexts).³⁰ Yet the decision to use the female war dance to tease the Paphlagonians implies recognition of its likelihood to confound; and to complicate matters more, the dance is orchestrated not by a Greek but by a Mysian.

The response of the Paphlagonians marks their lack of sophistication, as they confuse representation with reality in their shock at the mimicry of battle (6.1.6).³¹ However, although the ingenuous confusion of the Paphlagonians might alienate the reader from their way of seeing, the incongruity of the dances complicates the reader's identification with the Ten Thousand: are their various dances a display of unity and cohesion, or of fracture? Is the ironic take on Greek culture in the Mysian's staging of the female Pyrrhic a sophisticated insider's joke which playfully reaffirms the collective identity of the Ten Thousand through the implication of their shared knowledge (from which the Paphlagonians are excluded), or is Greek culture being sent up by a foreigner?³² The Greek reply to the Paphlagonians' question about female warriors (6.1.13) implies that they are in on the joke, but no Greek reaction to the slave girl's dance is given; we are told that the dance received great applause (ἐνταῦθα κρότος ἦν πολὺς, 6.1.13) without mention of who is applauding. How is the reader to respond to the display? Through the ambiguous responses of internal audiences, the reader's identification with the text's Greek protagonists is problematized.

Visual relationships are similarly complex in the description of the viewing of a spectacular Greek military display by the Persian leader Cyrus the Younger, his followers and allies. In this scene, Cyrus arranges a military review on the request of a Cilician queen who has given him funds after he is unable to pay the army's wages. Differences between Greeks and non-Greeks are flagged: Cyrus looks first at the barbarians and then at the Greeks (ἐθεώρει οὖν ὁ Κύρος πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς βαρβάρους ... εἶτα δὲ τοὺς Ἕλληνας, 1.2.16) who make up his army. Then Cyrus orders the Greeks to advance (1.2.17-18):

As they went on faster and faster, at length with a shout the troops broke into a run of their accord, in the direction of the camp. This terrified the barbarians; the Cilician woman fled in her carriage and the market workers abandoned their wares and ran away. The Greeks, meanwhile, with a roar of laughter came up to their tents. The Cilician woman, seeing the brilliance and discipline of the army, was filled with wonder; and Cyrus was pleased to see the fear with which the Greeks inspired the barbarians.

ἐκ δὲ τούτου θάπτον προΐόντων σὺν κραυγῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου δρόμος ἐγένετο τοῖς στρατιώταις ἐπὶ τὰς σκηνάς, τῶν δὲ βαρβάρων φόβος πολὺς, καὶ ἦ τε Κίλισσα ἔφυγεν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρμαμάξης καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καταλιπόντες τὰ ὄνια ἔφυγον. οἱ δὲ Ἕλληνες σὺν γέλῳ ἐπὶ

τὰς σκηνὰς ἤλθον. ἡ δὲ Κίλισσα ἰδοῦσα τὴν λαμπρότητα καὶ τὴν τάξιν τοῦ στρατεύματος ἐθαύμασε. Κύρος δὲ ἦσθη τὸν ἐκ τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τοὺς βαρβάρους φόβον ἰδών.

Although the display of the army has been staged at the queen's request, she is afraid and runs away. The responses of internal audiences problematize the reader's response. Whose display is it? Is it a triumphant, self-validating display of Greek success?³³ The Greeks advance on the order of Cyrus, but break into a run of their own accord (1.2.17). Their spectacular appearance receives attention: 'They all had bronze helmets, crimson tunics, greaves and uncovered shields' (εἶχον δὲ πάντες κράνη χαλκᾶ καὶ χιτῶνας φοινικοῦς καὶ κνημίδας καὶ τὰς ἀσπίδας ἐκκεκαλυμμένας, 1.2.16). Is this Cyrus' display, asserting his military might, or is this an act of self-assertion by the Greeks which insists upon their independence from Cyrus' command? Their response of laughter, which no one else shares, hints at their autonomy.

Despite the flouting of his orders (through an excessive interpretation of them), Cyrus is pleased. He feels pleasure at the fear with which the Greeks inspire the barbarians (1.2.18) despite the fact that he himself is a barbarian; apparently, from his point of view the display is a success, producing his power. We are prompted to consider what a Greek response would consist of. The reader is invited to feel pleasure at the Greek spectacle, identifying with the Persian potentate, but is also simultaneously alienated from Cyrus' way of seeing. In Cyrus' gratified gaze, the potential of viewing to produce secure identifications is destabilized. The reader is left unsure how to look at the Greeks; equally, the reader's understanding of his or her own position as Greek is subtly undermined.

A similar moment occurs when Cyrus intervenes in the conflict between the troops of the Greek leaders Menon and Clearchus; he warns that if they fight each other, both he and they will be killed: 'all these barbarians you can see will be more hostile towards us than those fighting for the King' (πάντες οὗτοι οὕς ὁράτε βάρβαροι πολεμιώτεροι ἡμῖν ἔσονται τῶν παρὰ βασιλεῖ ὄντων, 1.5.16). The term 'barbarian' is not only used by the narrator to explain Cyrus' response, but is put into the prince's mouth.³⁴ The scene is highly ironic. Cyrus identifies his own followers as barbarians who risk becoming opposed to 'us' (ἡμῖν). The Greeks are invited to look at and identify Cyrus' barbarian troops, and therefore, implicitly, to reconfirm their own united identity as Greeks; by offering this threatening sight, Cyrus also invites the Greeks to identify with him. The Greeks' response is immediately to obey and abandon their quarrel. Viewing becomes involved in the production of identity; but the fact that it is a barbarian who presents this view subverts a straightforward reading of the formation of identities through sight.

Visual display is also involved in the production of Cyrus' power, as he asserts his control over the Greeks. As in Clearchus' display to his troops discussed above, the implication of a united identity is used to suppress internal Greek conflict. The political investment in the invitation to view is laid before the reader. Will the reader be convinced by the sight Cyrus offers, as the Greeks of the narrative appear

to be, and identify simultaneously with the Greeks and with Cyrus, succumbing to his control? Sight becomes a fraught, contested moment of self-positioning, in which the construction of identity is self-consciously both overdetermined and destabilized.

Conclusion

What sort of experience of being Greek does the *Anabasis* offer its readers? Although the Greek viewers presented in the text are sometimes placed in an empowered position, Greek visions of the foreign are often ambiguous or obscure; viewing the foreign can be a disturbing process. When Greeks view other Greeks, the reader's identification with the text's Greek protagonists is challenged through the involvement of viewing in divisions among the Ten Thousand on ethnic and class lines and in conflicts between leaders and men. The problem of identification is also posed in the representation of non-Greek viewers in the text: the reader is invited simultaneously to identify with and be alienated from both the barbarian viewers and the Greek objects of view. Furthermore, issues of identity are often self-consciously addressed: the attempt to foster a shared identity through sight is manipulated in the domination of one group of Greeks by another, and in the domination of the Greeks by Cyrus.

By allowing the reader to experience travel in Asia vicariously through the eyes of the Ten Thousand, but also to view the Ten Thousand critically both from the perspective of an inside observer and through the eyes of others, the *Anabasis* engages the reader in testing out the implications of pan-Hellenist thought. However, the text reveals not only the possibilities offered by unified Greek action, but also its limitations, showing the tendency of Greek identity to fragment and of claims about Greek identity to be put to work in political manoeuvring. Although some moments of sight offer a self-validating model of Greekness, in the conflicts involved in viewing and its manipulation in the acquisition of power, the processes of identity formation are destabilized. We can see the *Anabasis* engaging with the problem of what it means to be Greek, in a way which is highly revealing for the history of Greek self-consciousness in the early fourth century.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Eran Almagor and Joseph Skinner for their kind invitation to participate in this volume. I am also very grateful to Stephen Hodkinson and Tim Whitmarsh for their advice and encouragement in the preparation of this chapter.
- 2 All references, unless stated otherwise, are to the *Anab.* Quotations from the *Anab.* use the OCT text of Marchant (1904).
- 3 Dillery (1995: 61). The term is borrowed from Pratt (1992).
- 4 Dillery (1995: 41) cites Xenophon's desire to found a city on the shores of the Black Sea (5.6.15-16) as evidence that the text is a call for pan-Hellenist conquest of Asia,

and refers to the description of the vulnerability of the Persian Empire to attack (1.5.9) as “panhellenist big-talk”, designed to precipitate action’ (61); however, he notes the failures of the Ten Thousand to act as an ideal community as well as their utopian potential (63–94). That the *Anab.* was open to be read also as a call for an attack on Persia in its own time is evidenced in the comments of later ancient writers, who treat the success of the Ten Thousand in making the journey back to Greece as a sign of the weakness of Persia: Isoc. 4.148, 5.90; Polyb. 3.6.9–12; Plut. *Art.* 20; Arr. *Anab.* 2.7.8–9. See also *Hell.* 3.4.2, where Lysander is prompted to persuade Agesilaus to attack Persia by the example of the Ten Thousand’s successful return.

- 5 The term ‘pan-Hellenism’ can also be used more broadly to indicate a concern with a Greek identity above and beyond identities associated with the *polis*, the region (such as the Peloponnese) or the ethno-linguistic group (such as the Dorians or Ionians); in this sense it has a much longer history. ‘Pan-Hellenism’ has been used to describe the growth of collective Greek consciousness in the aftermath of the Persian Wars; see Hall (1989: 16–17). It has been used to describe the interest in a Greek community and culture in the *Iliad*; see Nagy (1979: 6–7) on the synthesis of local Greek traditions, especially in the representation of the gods, in Homer. For a discussion of the different ways in which the term ‘pan-Hellenism’ has been used, see Mitchell (2007: xv–xxii).
- 6 Rood (2004: 310): ‘All that Cyrus’ commonplace contrast between disciplined Greeks and unruly barbarian hordes shows is that he has judged his audience well.’ Cf. Gauthier (1985), who argues that the text’s ideological rhetoric of Greek–barbarian opposition is a means of masking or legitimating the mercenary motives of the Ten Thousand’s adventure in Asia.
- 7 The question of how the Ten Thousand function as a community has been contentious. Nussbaum (1967) emphasizes their collective action as a ‘*polis* on the march’; see also Flamarion Cardoso (2001), who argues that a unified identity among the Ten Thousand is created through collective action. However, see Gauthier (1985: 23) on their discord and factionalism.
- 8 Ma (2004). Similarly, whereas some readers have stressed the ethnocentrism of the text (Tripodi 1995; Brulé 1995; Cartledge 1993), others have seen the *Anab.* as indicating sympathy or respect for non-Greeks (Anderson 2001: 139–41; L’Allier 2004; Roy 2007; Rzchiladze 1980).
- 9 This interest in visuality occurs throughout Xenophon’s works. See Goldhill (1998) on viewing in the *Mem.*; Harman (2008) on viewing in the *Cyr.*; and Harman (2009) on viewing in the *Lak. Pol.*
- 10 Mulvey (1975), Kaplan (1983) and De Lauretis (1987). More recently scholars have developed and nuanced this model to consider the variety of positions a spectator can adopt, examining, for example, the experience of the female viewer: see Sturken and Cartwright (2001: 72–108).
- 11 See hooks (1992) and Kaplan (1997). Cf. Pratt (1992), who analyses how the representation of the Western traveller as a viewer formulates his or her political positioning in eighteenth- to twentieth-century travel writing. For viewing and travel in the ancient world, see Elsner (1992, and 1994, on Pausanias) and Nightingale (2001, and 2004: 40–71, on the philosophical and cultural significance of *theoria*).
- 12 Herodotus: Hartog (1988: 248–58, 260–309); Konstan (1987); Redfield (1985); Thomas (2000: 190–212, 221–8, 249–69). Thucydides: Greenwood (2006: 19–41); Walker (1993). Cf. Davidson (1991), on Polybius.

- 13 Cf. Tripodi (1995, esp. 46–7 on θαῦμα), who discusses how descriptions of the landscape focus on the availability of its resources to Greek use.
- 14 Unless otherwise stated, translations are based on the revised edition of the Loeb (Dillery, 1998) with my own adaptations.
- 15 The question of whether this should be understood as a trophy has been debated; see discussion in Ma (2004: 317). Dillery (1995: 77) sees it as a 'monument to the Ten Thousand's triumph over all the barbarians they met'; contrast Tuplin (1999: 361–4).
- 16 Cf. the description of the Marsyas River as the place where Apollo flayed Marsyas (1.2.8–9), and of Midas' Spring as the place where Midas caught Silenus (1.2.13).
- 17 See 2.2.14–18; 4.4.9–15.
- 18 It also implies a sense of competition between the two leaders. See the discussion of conflict between Greeks below.
- 19 Ma (2004: 337) notes that depending on whether Apollonides was a Lydian who had lived in Cyme or Phocaea, learnt Aeolian Greek and therefore sounded 'Boeotian', or was a Boeotian who had lived in Lydia, Greek identity is being defined either on the grounds of descent, or alternatively, on the grounds of commitment to Greek ways of thinking, so that by the very act of disagreeing, Apollonides is disqualifying himself from being Greek. This conflict between ethnic or cultural models of Greekness relates closely to pan-Hellenist debates. For related discussion see also Vlassopoulos, this volume.
- 20 Similarly, just before this incident, we are told that Xenophon's contingent burnt everything that they could see that was combustible, making the whole land appear to be on fire and their force appear large, but are not told that the burning was done deliberately for this reason; it is explained through a result clause, not a purpose clause: ὥστε πᾶσα ἡ χώρα αἰθεσθαι ἐδόκει καὶ τὸ στράτευμα πολὺ εἶναι, 6.3.19.
- 21 Golden (1998: 5) supports Brodaeus' emendation ἑταίρων (fem., i.e. the competitors' concubines) over MSS' ἑταίρων (masc., i.e. their companions in arms). He is followed by Lane Fox (2004: 202–3).
- 22 Flamarion Cardoso (2001: 145). Similarly Ma (2004: 338) reads the contests as allowing 'the improvisation of community'.
- 23 *Peri Hipp.* 8.6.
- 24 L'Allier (2004: 230–1).
- 25 Golden (1998: 4).
- 26 Dillery (1998: 377 n.62).
- 27 This phrase is also used deceptively, to manipulate a viewer's interpretation of a sight. Following the death of Cyrus at Cunaxa, Clearchus sends a message to his barbarian ally Ariaeus, who is on the point of fleeing, that the Greeks have defeated the king 'as you see' (ὥς ὁρᾶτε, 2.1.4), and that he should therefore join them. By inviting him to see the Greeks as victors instead of as defeated, Clearchus tries to gain control of Ariaeus and strengthen his own position.
- 28 L'Allier (2004: 239).
- 29 See Ma (2004: 339). For related discussion, see Vlassopoulos, this volume.
- 30 Representations of women performing armed dances have been read as indicative of ritual, but also as the dances of *hetairai*. See Liventhal (1985); Poursat (1968: 586–615); Ceccarelli (1998: 58–80). Lane Fox (2004: 191) speculates on where the dancing girl might have learned this dance – whether she had been brought from Greece and so might have learned it there, or whether she had been acquired during the course of the journey.

- 31 The inability to understand mimetic representation is a mark of ignorance and stupidity in ancient thought; cf. the fear of Encolpius on seeing a painting of a dog in Petron. *Sat.* 29. From Ar. *Eq.* onwards, Paphlagonians were people to poke fun at (note this play's humorous character 'the Paphlagonian'); see also Luc. *Alex.* where Paphlagonians are stupid (9), as brainless as sheep (15) and easily deceived (17).
- 32 See Urry (2002) on the construction of the culturally 'authentic' in displays for foreign tourists.
- 33 Hanson (2001: 1); Dillery (1995: 65).
- 34 Cf. Cyrus' speech to the Greeks in which he says that they are superior to barbarians (1.7.3-4), discussed above.

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Apologetic Ethnography: Megasthenes' *Indica* and the Seleucid Elephant

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The opening years of the third century BC, as the *sparagmos* of Alexander's empire settled down into an established Great Power system of peer-kingdoms, witnessed a brilliant and creative burst of Greek ethnographic writing. Alexander's decade-long march across the Persian kingdom had betrayed the inadequacy of old ideas about non-Greek lands and peoples, but the major literary productions of his court were biographies and memoirs, exclusively focused on the great conqueror, his generals and their remarkable adventures; descriptions of the world and its inhabitants, where present, adhered to long-accepted forms.¹ By contrast, the early Successor Kingdoms, needing to stabilize and structure Greco-Macedonian rule over their new provinces, devoted considerable energies to generating, ordering and deploying a governmentally-useful geographic knowledge. This was a particularly pressing concern for the enormous empire carved out by Seleucus I Nicator and his son and co-ruler Antiochus I Soter, an imperial territory that stretched at its greatest extent from modern-day Tajikistan to modern-day Bulgaria. The Seleucid court ethnographies and geographies included Patrocles' influential periplus of the Caspian Sea (*FGrH* 712) and Demodamas' autobiographical account of his activities in Central Asia (*FGrH* 428); but the most important by far was the *Indica* of Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador to the newly-established Mauryan kingdom (*FGrH* 715).² This chapter will investigate the close relationship between Megasthenes' ethnography and Seleucid court discourse. In particular, it will demonstrate how Megasthenes' description of India served a legitimizing purpose for Seleucus I and his actions in India.

The Treaty of the Indus

In the chaos that followed Alexander the Great's death (323 BC), the Macedonian general Seleucus Nicator had rapidly extended his dominion from his Babylonian power-base over the eastern satrapies of the Macedonian Empire. In 305 or 304 BC,

having gained control of the Iranian plateau and much of Central Asia, Seleucus guided his army through the Hindu Kush into the Punjab. For a second time, Greco-Macedonian forces invaded India. In contrast to the weak and untidy patchwork of rival principalities and gana-sangha oligarchies encountered by Alexander more than two decades earlier, the land Seleucus entered had recently been annexed and united by the energetic ruler of the new Mauryan kingdom, Chandragupta, known in Greek sources as Sandracottos. The course of the campaign against this new Indian potentate is not known in detail.³ After an unknown series of events, Seleucus Nicator and Chandragupta Maurya, Emperor of the West and Emperor of the East, made peace. This 'Treaty of the Indus' was a momentous and foundational act of the new Hellenistic world order. It had three main terms:⁴

- The two kings were joined by some kind of marriage alliance (ἐπιγαμία or κῆδος).⁵
- Seleucus transferred to Chandragupta's kingdom the easternmost satrapies of Alexander's empire.
- Chandragupta gave to Seleucus 500 Indian war elephants.

The territory-for-elephants exchange was mutually beneficial. Geopolitically, Seleucus abandoned territories he could never securely hold in favour of peace and security in the East. The treaty and elephants allowed him to turn his attention against his great western rival, Antigonos Monophthalmus.⁶ Chandragupta for his part gained unchallenged expansion into India's north-west corridor. Moreover, the fact and terms of the treaty were a recognition of equal, royal status for kings who lacked the legitimacy of appointment or inheritance. The agreement would retain its ideological legitimacy for both kingdoms throughout the third century.⁷

Even so, Seleucus' position was complex. On the one hand, his kingdom's security and ultimate success were founded on his relationship with the Indian king: Chandragupta's war elephants defeated Antigonos Monophthalmus at Ipsus in 301 BC.⁸ As we will see, Seleucus' coinage and the kingdom's official historiography depicted the Treaty of the Indus as a diplomatic victory and celebrated it accordingly. On the other hand, Seleucus had abandoned the very territories in which he had first achieved prominence; he had diminished, not extended, Macedonian rule; Alexander's Greco-Macedonian settlers in the Hindu Kush would now be Yona minorities on the periphery of the Indian kingdom. Megasthenes, Seleucus' envoy to Chandragupta's court and possibly his negotiating representative at the Indus, composed an ethnographic account of India and the contemporary Mauryan kingdom. This chapter will argue that his Indian ethnography attempted to neutralize this ideologically confusing and potentially embarrassing contradiction. Megasthenes' *Indica* was a radical work in fundamental ways: it shifted the centre of Indian geography from the Indus basin to the Ganges, representing a move from Achaemenid to Mauryan ideas of imperial space. It also transformed the Indian kingdom from a utopian, hypertrophic fringe into a real-world peer, in some sense analogous to the Seleucid kingdom-in-creation. Given constraints of space, this chapter will address two ways in which Megasthenes engages with and justifies Seleucus' retreat from India: (i) by representing India as an unconquerable territory; and (ii) by emphasizing the martial qualities of

Chandragupta's elephants. Both approaches, in their different ways, correspond to broader Seleucid discourses and practices.

Unconquerable cities

At some point during or after his tenure, ambassador Megasthenes published an ethnographic treatise, entitled Ἰνδικά. Although the work has been lost, Megasthenes' ancient reputation as the best-informed of Indographers means that extensive and overlapping portions of his *Indica* have been preserved by several later authors in direct quotation or abbreviated paraphrase.⁹ Broad similarities of content, theme and structure, as well as specific equivalences of vocabulary and phrase, permit a relatively unproblematic identification of Megasthenes' *Indica*, even when he is not explicitly named. In Jacoby's conservative estimate, a good 36 pages of the *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (715) have been preserved, making Megasthenes one of the best represented of all Hellenistic ethnographers (or historians). The *Indica* was probably composed in three books: the first apparently discussed India's geography, natural history and climate; the second, the country's primitive life, its early civilization and historical developments; and the third, the customs and administration of the contemporary Mauryan state.

The *Indica*'s historical account (its second book) narrated a culture-myth, explicitly represented as indigenous Indian tradition, of the transformation of Indian society by Dionysus and Heracles.¹⁰ This *Kulturgeschichte* establishes the important ethnographic principles of historical causation that the work will systematically deploy. As such, it plays a central role in the logic of Megasthenes' Seleucid apology: as the modalities of cultural formation play out through the course of Indian history, Seleucus' territorial abandonment is made inevitable.

Prehistoric India, that is, India before the arrival of Dionysus, was a world without cities (*FGrH* 715 F12):

Long ago the Indians were nomads, just like the non-agricultural Scythians, who, wandering in their wagons, exchange one part of Scythia for another, at one time or another, neither inhabiting cities nor honoring shrines of the gods.¹¹

In Megasthenes' stagist model, the earliest condition of Indian man was not only indicated by a lack of urbanism or religious piety, but also by an absence of rootedness and territoriality. Indian space is unmarked and expansive and, like the Scythian steppe, uninvested with meaning; it can be abandoned willy-nilly. The *Indica*'s language here is strikingly Herodotean and the comparison clearly points towards Herodotus' Scythian ethnography.¹² The account moves on to associate emphatically the absence of cities and religion with the stock elements of a generic barbarity: wearing skins not clothes, eating bark not grain, devouring meat raw not cooked (*FGrH* 715 F12). This absence of cities is, for Megasthenes, the very condition of Dionysus' conquest. India is an open, accessible space: '[Dionysus] overran all of India, since there was no important city [μηδεμιάς ούσης ἀξιολόγου πόλεως] powerful enough to oppose him' (*FGrH* 715 F4). India could be conquered because

the Indians were nomads. Megasthenes establishes a connection between urban power and resistance to conquest that resonates throughout his treatise.

Dionysus' invasion put an end to primitive, timeless India. Arrian's paraphrase runs (Arr. *Ind.* 7.1-9 = *FGrH* 715 F12):

When Dionysus came and became master of the Indians he founded cities and established laws in the cities, he dispensed wine to the Indians, just as to the Greeks, he taught them to sow the land, giving them seeds ... Dionysus was the first to yoke the oxen to the plough, and made the majority of Indians agriculturalists instead of nomads; he also armed them with weapons of war. Dionysus also taught them to worship other gods, but himself most of all, clashing cymbals and playing drums.¹³

Megasthenes has avoided the naturalistic, impersonal and gradualist anthropology associated with Democritus¹⁴ in favor of Dionysus' momentous role as royal benefactor, teacher and inventor. Just as the lack of cities was primitive life's first mentioned and fundamental absence, so the creation of cities is the first foundational act of civilization and the requirement for associated cultural processes. In Diodorus' parallel account, Dionysus is the *oecist* of πόλεων ἀξιολόγων; the diction here responds directly to the absence of a single important city, which was the precondition of Dionysus' conquest.

Dionysus' city-founding activities abolish the very circumstance that permitted the success of his own invasion, making it a unique episode in Indian history. Dionysus also arms the population and influences their battle-order. This obviously goes hand-in-hand with the land's new, urban defensibility. Alongside its generic civilizing function, therefore, the invasion of Dionysus operates as a guarantee of India's future isolation and impregnability, characteristics which Megasthenes' ethnographic descriptions and continued historical narrative repeatedly emphasize.

The *Indica* introduces a second civilizing superman, Heracles, 15 generations after Dionysus' invasion. In accordance with the now established ethnographic principle, Megasthenes insists that Heracles is no invader. Despite the similarity of his clothing and weapon to the Theban hero,¹⁵ the new impregnability and inaccessibility of the land require that he be an autochthonous son of India. In addition to purging land and sea of wild beasts, we are told that Heracles 'was the founder of not a few cities [πόλεων οὐκ ὀλίγων], the most distinguished and largest of which he called Palimbothra. In it he built a luxurious palace and established a great number of settlers; he fortified the city with remarkable ditches filled with river water [τὴν τε πόλιν ὀχυρώσαι τάφροις ἀξιολόγοις ποταμίους ὕδασι πληρουμέναις: *FGrH* 715 F4].¹⁶ Heracles continues the urbanization, and thus fortification, of India on a large scale. Chandragupta's capital, Palimbothra (Pāṭaliputra), stands out in the surviving fragments as the only named city. That it is founded by Heracles, not Dionysus, that is, its emergence in the second and not the first stage of cultural development, may encode the city's late rise to primacy under the final Nanda kings in the fourth century BC.¹⁷ The adjective ἀξιόλογος appears again, here qualifying the city's defensive works (τάφροις ἀξιολόγοις), precisely the feature of urbanism that Megasthenes' principle should underline.

The ethnographic principle outlined in Indian prehistory – the correlation of urbanism and unconquerability – plays out in Megasthenes' discussion of contemporary India. By the time of Megasthenes' sojourn there, he reports that progressive urbanization has transformed India from an empty expanse of aimless nomadic wanderings into a land garrisoned by countless cities: 'One cannot enumerate accurately the number of cities in India because of their number' (*FGrH* 715 F17). The *Indica's* description of Palimbothra should be understood as the culminating instantiation of this development. In the third book, Megasthenes demonstrates the astonishing and invincible might of the new Mauryan kingdom (*FGrH* 715 F18b):

At the junction of this [the Ganges] and the other river, Palimbothra was established, eighty stades in length, fifteen in width, in the shape of a parallelogram, surrounded by a perforated wooden construction, in order that arrows can be shot through the holes. A ditch lies in front, as a defense and as a reservoir for the sewerage from the city. The *ethnos* in which the city is located is called the Prasii, and it is the most distinguished of all. The ruler must be named after the city, called 'Palimbothros' in addition to his family name, such as Sandrocottos to whom Megasthenes was sent.¹⁸

The capital city of the Mauryan kingdom is the largest of all Indian urban foundations, populated by the most distinguished of all Indian tribes. As in the account of its foundation by Heracles (above), the city's defences receive the most attention, at least in the surviving fragments. The large wooden palisade, uncovered by the late nineteenth-century archaeological excavations,¹⁹ the 570 towers,²⁰ the network of arrow slits and the encircling ditch 'for defence' make this city a bastion against foreign conquest. Importantly, a direct equivalence is made between city and king; the Mauryan emperor takes the city's name as a royal title, eliding the city's impregnability with his own invincibility.

In the context of earlier Indography, Megasthenes' urbanism is doubly radical. First, city-foundation gives a temporal structure to Indian history. Herodotus' India is populated by nomadic and settled peoples concurrently (*Hdt.* 3.98.3): ἔστι δὲ πολλὰ ἔθνη Ἰνδῶν καὶ οὐκ ὁμόφωνα σφίσι, καὶ οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν νομάδες εἰσὶ οἱ δὲ οὐ (‘there are many Indian tribes and they do not share the same language; some are nomads, others not’).²¹ Megasthenes transforms this uncomplicated and synchronic μὲν ... δέ opposition into a diachronic stagism. Indian history can now be periodized into pre-urban and urban eras. In doing so, he gives India a chronological depth so frequently denied it in earlier edge-of-the-earth ethnographies. It is important to note that the cultural heroism of Dionysus and Heracles and the urban trajectory of Indian history do not eradicate nomadism in its entirety. Megasthenes, describing contemporary Mauryan society in the *Indica's* third book, observes that nomadism has been shifted to the mountainous margins of the Mauryan kingdom and incorporated as a specific social function and economic occupation within the monarch-centred ‘caste’ system. The shepherds and hunters, the third ‘caste’, ‘live a wandering tent-living existence’ (*FGrH* 715 F19b); ‘they do not live in cities or villages, but are nomads and live up in the mountains’ (*FGrH* 715 F19a). They receive a regular food allowance from the king in return for freeing the land from wild beasts. That is to say, the

single civilizing act of Heracles has become the socially-embedded 'caste' identity of a particular group, whose marginal, nomadic existence permits the settled, urban life for the rest of the kingdom. The Mauryan kingdom accomplishes its own ever-renewing cultural heroism through occupational differentiation.

Second, Megasthenes has inverted a key and ubiquitous principle of classical ethnography. As we have seen, Megasthenes' description of primitive India makes clear reference to Herodotus' *Skuthikoi logoi*. One of the most famous passages in Herodotus' *Histories* is his statement that Scythian nomadism was the greatest of all human discoveries, because it was the key to unconquerability (Hdt. 4.46.2-3):

The Scythian people has made the cleverest discovery that we know in what is the most important of all human affairs; I do not praise the Scythians in all respects, but in this, the most important: that they have contrived that no one who attacks them can escape, and no one can catch them if they do not want to be found. For when men have no established cities or forts, but are all nomads and mounted archers, not living by tilling the soil but by raising cattle and carrying their dwellings on wagons, how can they not be invincible and unapproachable?²²

The causation could not be clearer. Herodotus' Scythians are ἄμαχοι τε καὶ ἄποροι because they are nomads. Scythian nomadism is not associated, as in Megasthenes, with primitivism: the Scythians sacrifice, cook and wear clothes. Rather, in Hartog's felicitous formulation, nomadism is a strategy which is in addition a way of life.²³ And it works: Herodotus is emphatic that Darius' Scythian invasion failed because of the absence of cities. Comparable assertions of nomadic unconquerability recur throughout post-Herodotean ethnography and historiography. In Arrian's *Bithynica*, for example, contemporary Scythian nomadism is represented as a historically situated rejection of an earlier farming, urban phase, when the settled Scythians had been overrun by the Thracians.²⁴ Similarly, for Hieronymus of Cardia, a peer of Megasthenes, the Nabataeans secured their independence from Macedonian aggression by means of their dogmatic opposition to settled habitation and agriculture;²⁵ for Agatharchides, nomadism had allowed the Nabataeans to successfully resist Assyrian, Median, Persian and Macedonian imperial ambitions.²⁶ Furthermore, Greek ethnographic literature strongly characterized the nomadic life as permanently hostile and aggressive.²⁷ In striking contrast, nomadism in the *Indica* functions as a vulnerability. It is an aberrant way of life, defined only by its deficiencies. Megasthenes represents Indian nomadism as anterior, primitive and unmarked. It is the base-line of existence, superseded through cultural discovery. Nomadism, that is to say, the absence of cities, allows Dionysus' invasion to succeed.

Can we trace the genealogy of Megasthenes' radical inversion? I would suggest that the *Indica*'s principle of urban defensibility is a sensitive response to two traditions, one theoretical and one historical. We must look to strands of fifth- and fourth-century Greek *Kulturgeschichte*. Here the independent city-state naturally manifested the *telos* of the civilizing process, and nomadism the primordial state of nature out of which humanity laboriously dragged itself. The primitive nomad was an exposed, vulnerable being, culturally naked and defenseless against beast and nature.²⁸ For certain naturalistic models, city foundation was motivated by communal defensive requirements,

albeit of a limited and local nature.²⁹ Aristotle's model of heroic kingship's benefactions focuses, like Megasthenes', on synoecism and defensibility.³⁰

Political and military activities of the fourth century manifest a growing awareness of the transformative potential of urban foundations. The first major demonstration of a deliberate urbanistic strategy within Greece is Epaminondas' synoecisms of Messene and Megalopolis as bastions against renewed Spartan expansionism: Megalopolis is explicitly considered a defensive foundation to strengthen Arcadian resistance.³¹ However, this is not quite the urbanism of Megasthenes' ethnography. Peloponnesian synoecism was more a matter of politics than space: it was associated with people power and an anti-Spartan foreign policy, which threatened the alliance of oligarchic interests on which Lacedaemon's soft imperialism in the Peloponnese depended.³² Moreover, there is an important distinction between, on the one hand, *polis* foundation as the generating act of a single, independent political community, for example Megalopolis or Messene, and, on the other hand, city formation as a way of structuring power around defensible nodes in an expansive, territorial, monarchic state. This second type, separating a city's military function from any autonomous political pretensions, developed as a spatial strategy of the fourth-century Macedonian kingdom. Philip II's numerous fortified settlements, concentrated in Thrace and upper Macedonia, were primary foundations of previously non-urbanized peoples, designed to bring security to rugged areas.³³ Indeed, Philip was depicted as a comprehensive culture-hero of the Megasthenic order in Arrian's famous speech of Alexander to the mutineers at Opis. Philip's civilizing activities, according to his son, centred on city foundation and transformed a militarily vulnerable Macedonia into a geopolitical master.³⁴

It seems that Megasthenes combined the practical motivation behind the Macedonian kings' city foundations and the theoretical musings of prehistoric anthropology into an ethnographic causal principle. The possibility of Mesopotamian influence should not be ignored. The primacy of city foundation, the single moment of cultural heroism, the divine identity of the founder-figure, the co-creation of urbanism and religion, the polarity of nomad and city and the coexistence of multiple urban foundations within a single kingdom are all elements, albeit not explicitly theorized, of Babylonian genesis accounts.³⁵ It is not impossible, given Megasthenes' praise of Nebuchadnezzar II and his attachment to the Seleucid court, as well as Seleucus' own participation in Babylonian religious culture,³⁶ that these Near Eastern myths helped to shape the *Indica's* prehistory.

The *Indica's* emphatic urbanism, a historical trajectory culminating in the contemporary Mauryan Empire and its megalopolis of Palimbothra, has an apologetic function. The founding of cities means the closing of India. In an important passage, Megasthenes chronicled a series of unsuccessful royal expeditions against India (*FGrH* 715 F11a):

Megasthenes, moreover, agrees with this point of view when he urges disbelief in the ancient accounts of India, for no army was ever sent outside by the Indians, nor did any from outside invade and conquer them, except that with Heracles and Dionysus and now with the Macedonians. But Sesostris the Egyptian and Tearcon the Ethiopian advanced as far as Europe, and Nebuchadnezzar, esteemed more

among the Chaldaeans than Heracles, went as far as the Pillars and Tearcon also went that far and led an army from Iberia into Thrace and to Pontus. Idanthyrus the Scythian overran Asia as far as Egypt, but none of these touched India, and Semiramis died before her attempt. The Persians sent for the Hydracae from India as mercenaries, but did not take an expedition there, only coming near it when Cyrus attacked the Massagetae.³⁷

By inventing precedents for Seleucus' withdrawal, Megasthenes normalizes and vindicates the peace treaty. Seleucus can be slipped unproblematically into this rhythmical history of power and its limits in Asia. By the time of Megasthenes, the country is, quite simply, unconquerable; Seleucus' treaty with 'Sandracottos-Palimbothros' is recognition of this basic power reality. Moreover, the ethnographic principle encoded in the *Indica's* *Kulturgeschichte*, historical narrative and contemporary ethnography is an eminently suitable representation of the praxis and ideology of Seleucus' own city-founding activities. Megasthenes does not merely legitimate a territorial retreat, but he also, perhaps more importantly, transforms this limiting of Seleucid imperial space into an act of cultural self-identification. The *Indica's* urbanism is a valorizing affirmation of one of the central acts of early Seleucid monarchy – city-foundation. The identity of city and king is a reflection of early Hellenistic practice: the Indian monarch was named after his capital; conversely, the Seleucid cities were named after their monarchs. Megasthenes' civilizing, defensive and administrative city is the Seleucid colony in its essence.

The Indian elephant

The Seleucid kingdom's security and ultimate success were based on its founder's relationship with the Indian king: Seleucus Nicator had exchanged Macedonian provinces for 500 elephants. Chandragupta's beasts defeated Antigonus Monophthalmus at Ipsus in 301 and so opened Syria, the Mediterranean coastline and ultimately Asia Minor to Seleucid expansion. Megasthenes' work aims to demonstrate in ethnographic mode that his king made a good deal. India was not only now unconquerable, but the Indian elephants won by Seleucus were the finest of its animals.

Three passages are particularly germane. Alongside the requisite cataloguing of faunal thaumata (gold-digging ants, the electric eel, bull-swallowing snakes, urinating flying snakes, etc.), the *Indica's* first book devoted most attention to the elephant – its capture, longevity and intelligence (*FGrH* 715 F20a and b)³⁸. We are told that India produces an abundance of the largest elephants (πλείστους δὲ καὶ μεγίστους ἐλέφαντας ἐκτρέφει), which are far superior in strength to the Libyan ones (ταῖς ῥώμαις τὰ θηρία ταῦτα πολὺ προέχει τῶν κατὰ τὴν Λιβύην γεννωμένων):³⁹ we already have in Megasthenes the competitive opposition of Indian and African elephant forces that will appear so frequently in representations of Seleucid–Ptolemaic battle (see below). Trained by Indians for war, Chandragupta's elephants are effective at tipping an uncertain battle towards victory (μεγάλας συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι ῥοπὰς πρὸς τὴν νίκην);⁴⁰ precisely this quality is emphasized in court-derived accounts of

Seleucid victories, both at Ipsus and the appropriately named ‘Elephant Battle’ (see below). Second, it is stressed that elephant ownership in Chandragupta’s kingdom is a royal privilege and monopoly;⁴¹ the same will of course be true of the elephant forces received by Seleucus and his successors. Accordingly, in Megasthenes’ ethnography the grant of Indian elephants to Seleucus functions in and of itself as an acknowledgement of the Diadoch’s royal status. The third passage is more obscure. We have seen that the territory-for-elephants exchange at the Treaty of the Indus was secured or framed by some kind of royal marriage; the elephants may have been understood as a kind of dowry or marriage gift. In this light, it is striking that Megasthenes invents a precedent in which the Indian Heracles, who as founder of the Mauryan capital Palimbothra functions in some sense as an antetype for Chandragupta, gave to his daughter and sexual partner a dowry of 500 war elephants.⁴²

Megasthenes’ ethnography was only one valorization of Indian elephants. In fact, with astonishing rapidity Chandragupta’s elephants were turned into the recognizable symbol of the Seleucid kingdom, the flag of its dynasty and the icon of its might. The Indian elephant was an ethnographic blazon that could at one and the same time encode the kingdom’s beginnings, military successes and spatial expansiveness. To think Seleucid was to see elephants.

This is apparent in a number of ideologically significant tableaux. It cannot be doubted that Seleucus’ Indian elephants played an important and decisive on-the-ground role at the Battle of Ipsus.⁴³ Nonetheless, the narrative foregrounding of the elephant force in our extant accounts demonstrates a deliberate decision to privilege their function: the emplotment interprets Seleucus’ victory in the West as the consequence of peace in the East. Ceded East and conquered West are bracketed through the march of Chandragupta’s elephants. Such an argument is spatialized in the *ktisis* narrative of Antioch-by-Daphne, an important colony founded by Seleucus I immediately following the battle to replace Antigonus’ nearby eponymous capital and thereby firmly to incorporate Syria into the Seleucid imperial landscape. According to Libanius, Seleucus, playing the role of architect-king by tracing out the urban plan on virgin soil, distributed his Indian elephants around the new city’s perimeter to mark where its defensive towers should be constructed.⁴⁴ This symbolic act – a kind of petrification of Chandragupta’s beasts – equated the Indus Treaty’s elephants with the city’s bastions and so with the permanent defence of the kingdom.⁴⁵ Their use bracketed the kingdom’s full territorial expanse (the Syrian capital is part of a kingdom stretching from the Mediterranean to India) and represented the foundation of Antioch as the culminating fulfilment of the Treaty of the Indus.

Indian elephants continue to be honoured under Antiochus I, where they were used to represent the military success of the Seleucid dynasty against marauding Galatians, soon after 275 BC. In his clever, meta-literary *prolalia* ‘Zeuxis’,⁴⁶ Lucian recounts how Antiochus’ Indian elephants defeated a far larger Galatian force. As at Ipsus, the elephants turn the battle:

The elephants pursued them, trampling them down, or tossing them high in the air with their trunks, or snatching them up and goring them with their tusks. And finally these elephants by their mighty efforts ensured victory for Antiochus.⁴⁷

In recognition of their role, Antiochus 'instructed them to carve nothing on the trophy except an elephant'.⁴⁸ Seleucid court art and literature transformed this battle into an ideologically potent image of monarchic victory: Simonides of Magnesia celebrated the battle in a lost epic;⁴⁹ Pytheas of Boura perhaps was commissioned to paint the triumphant elephants.⁵⁰ Although the official, monumental art of the Seleucid kingdom has not survived, there are several similar depictions in the minor arts of an Indian elephant overpowering a Galatian fighter.⁵¹ The most famous is a small terracotta (12cm in height) from Mysian Myrina. The war elephant carries, above a heavy rug, a large, wooden howdah, reinforced with two Macedonian shields below the crenellation; a bell hangs from the elephant's neck (just as in eastern Seleucid coinage); the elephant is seizing a Galatian, who can be identified by the oval shield on his left arm. Whether or not it reproduces Antiochus' trophy or Pytheas' painting, the statuette generates a visually striking confrontation between legitimate Seleucid power and marauding Galatians. The work belongs in a long iconographic tradition of the victory of order over chaos, of state over nomadic life, but in contrast to, say, Attalus I's encoding of his defeat of the Galatians, which functioned on a Greek-barbarian cultural polarity and consciously recalled the Persian Wars' defence of Hellenism,⁵² the terracotta celebrates the military might of an Asian empire, stretching from the battlefield in Asia Minor to the Hindu Kush.

Numismatic evidence, of course, provides an excellent source of court-directed iconography. In the immediate aftermath of Seleucus' Indian campaign, the major Babylonian and Persian mints established a typology for the 'conquest of the East', adopting Dionysian and tropaic imagery,⁵³ apparently paralleling Seleucus' and Alexander's Indian exploits.⁵⁴ Elephant imagery, appearing around the turn of the century, came to dominate central and eastern coin typology by the 290s and was prevalent throughout the kingdom.⁵⁵ The various elephant types were far more prominent in the eastern half of the kingdom; several were struck on the Persian weight system⁵⁶ and one bears an Aramaic inscription.⁵⁷ While the relationship between coin type and historical event is, of course, far from direct or unproblematic, the Dionysus and elephant types surely encode the Treaty of the Indus and its 500 war elephants.⁵⁸ They represent a deliberate choice to privilege Seleucus' military activities in India over those in, say, Babylonia, Iran, Bactria, or the West. The association of the elephant reverse types and personal royal involvement in India is confirmed by the noticeable absence of elephant imagery on the precious metal coins of Antiochus I, Antiochus II, Seleucus II, Antiochus Hierax, Seleucus III and Achaeus,⁵⁹ and their remarkable return under Antiochus III, who campaigned in the Hindu Kush.

The Seleucid privileging of Indian elephant imagery was absorbed and then exploited by the other state entities of the Hellenistic world. The process can be observed at three distinct levels of operation: the empire's neighboring peer-monarchies (Antigonid and Ptolemaic); expansionist, aggressive Rome; and a rebel people emancipating itself from within the empire (the Jews).

One of the most interesting narrative refractions of the contested transition from a single, unified kingdom to multiple monarchic states is a sympotic toast to Demetrius Poliorcetes. Three accounts, all ultimately derived from Phylarchus, report that his friends restricted the royal title to Demetrius and his father alone, reducing the other

Diadochoi to the status of subordinate officials. Here is the fullest version, from Plutarch's biography (25.4-9):

[Demetrius] mocked and scoffed at those who would call anyone other than him and his father 'king'. He listened happily to revellers toast Demetrius as king, but Seleucus as elephantarch, Ptolemy as nauarch, Lysimachus as gazophylax, and Agathocles as Sicilian nesiarch.⁶⁰

This passage should describe events in 302 BC.⁶¹ Accordingly, this is strong evidence for an almost immediate external characterization of Seleucid power by means of the Treaty of the Indus. Given the ironic bite to the other titles (notably Agathocles, whose African dream had collapsed in 307, restricting him to Sicily) it is possible that the object of mockery here is Seleucus' abandonment of the Macedonian provinces in India.⁶² Even so, out of every possible identification, Demetrius' courtiers focus on the elephant force received from Chandragupta; needless to say, Seleucus' elephantarchia would prove no laughing matter at Ipsus.

The collapse of Antigonid power in Asia and competing Seleucid-Ptolemaic claims to Coele Syria meant that, for a century and a half after Ipsus, the Ptolemaic monarchy experienced the full brunt of the Seleucid elephant force, attested for the First Syrian War,⁶³ Raphia,⁶⁴ and during Antiochus IV's invasion.⁶⁵ The Ptolemies developed their own methods of acquiring elephants during the reign of Ptolemy II: a network of harbours and stations running along the coast of Troglodytic Africa; military expansion into Lower Nubia; a well-paid personnel of hunters and transporters; and associated ethnographic and geographical writings (Agatharchides above all)⁶⁶ to answer Megasthenes. In response to Seleucid characterization through Indian elephants, it seems that the Ptolemies identified themselves with African elephants. One of the neatest demonstrations of the ideological salience of this elephantine ethnographic opposition is the (now lost) inscription from Adulis in Eritria, recorded by the sixth-century monk Cosmas Indicopleustes.⁶⁷ This inscription described Ptolemy III's successful occupation of much of the Seleucid kingdom at the opening of the Third Syrian War. After running through the titles and provinces of the king and his beloved sister, the inscription records Ptolemy's campaign into Asia with 'a force of Troglodytic and Ethiopic elephants, which he and his father first hunted from these lands and, bringing them down to Egypt, trained them for military use'.⁶⁸ Ptolemy's conquests of all lands up to Bactria are symbolized by his mastery of the Seleucid force of Indian elephants (κυριεύσας ... ἐλεφάντων Ἰνδικῶν) and the return of temple treasures stolen by the Achaemenids. This is a rich, dense text that, amongst other things, inscribes Ptolemaic and Seleucid administrative geography, expresses Euergetes' surpassing achievements and identifies Seleucid with Achaemenid Asia and Ptolemaic with Saite Egypt. But immediately striking is the foregrounding of Ptolemy III's and Seleucus II's elephant forces. The inscription deliberately opposes the respective African and Indian origins of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid elephants. Just as Ethiopia and Troglodytia are not named among the provinces of the Egyptian kingdom, so India is not listed within the Seleucid imperial structure Euergetes absorbed. Each kingdom is represented not only by its own elephant force, but also by the homeland of their elephants, beyond the most distant political border of

respective royal territory. We find this symmetrical characterization in several literary texts, both in the natural historical comparison of Indian and African elephants, but also in the historiographical depiction of their tusk-to-tusk confrontation in the Syrian Wars.⁶⁹

From their first, hostile encounter at Heraclea, the Romans considered elephants the exotic weapon of the aggressive enemy – Epirote, Carthaginian or Seleucid.⁷⁰ Roman awareness and exploitation of Seleucid elephant imagery can be seen in the terms of the Peace of Apamea: in a provision similar to that forced on the Carthaginians after Zama, Antiochus III was obliged to surrender all his elephants and was forbidden from rebuilding the force; his elephants were handed over, along with Seleucid territory in Asia Minor, to Eumenes. L. Scipio Asiaticus paraded in his Roman triumph 1231 ivory tusks.⁷¹ The terms of the peace were enforced again after the death of Antiochus IV when Cn. Octavius hamstringed the entire herd at Apamea.⁷² This was an act of symbolic violence designed to objectify and disseminate Roman supremacy, literally crippling the Seleucid Empire; the violence was crueler for being symbolic. Polybius (31.2.11) identifies here a deliberate intention to undermine the kingdom: the Roman envoys were sent ‘to hamstringing the elephants and generally to cripple the royal power’.⁷³

The Jewish revolt against Seleucid authority exploited the Indian elephant’s symbolism in a different way. Whereas the Hellenistic monarchies and Rome used or had access to their own elephant forces, for the Jewish rebels operating within the Seleucid kingdom the elephant was a monopoly of the royal power and sovereign empire. Accordingly, in a reflection of Seleucid court discourse, the elephant signifies the extraordinary might, geographical extent and massive military superiority of the overbearing central kingdom; and so successful attacks on the elephant come to represent not only political and military resistance, but also group heroism, individual martyrdom and the miraculous, divinely authorized, against-the-odds quality of the rebellion’s successes. The clearest instance is 1 Maccabees’ account of the self-sacrificing heroism of Eleazar, Judas’ brother, at the Battle of Beth-Zechariah. Here, the kingdom’s beasts thunder into battle, each with four soldiers in its howdah and an Indian mahout on its neck.⁷⁴ The translator continues (1 Macc. 6.43-6):

And Eleazar, known as ‘Avaran’,⁷⁵ saw one of the beasts equipped with royal armor. It was taller than all the others, and he thought that the king was on it. So he gave his life for the salvation of his people and to make for himself an everlasting name. He ran courageously into the middle of the phalanx, and he killed to the left and right; they parted before him on both sides. He crawled under the elephant, he stabbed it from below, and killed it. It fell to the ground upon him, and he died there.⁷⁶

In a Samson-like moment, Eleazar pulls the great bulk of the royal elephant down on himself. The potency of the act lies, of course, in the association of elephant and king. According to the account of Nicolaus of Damascus (as preserved by Josephus),⁷⁷ Eleazar identified the mahout (ὁ κυβερνῶν τὸν ἐλέφαντα) as Antiochus V. The symbolism is evident: the Seleucid monarch ruling his empire is figured here as the mahout guiding his elephant.⁷⁸

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the symbolic force of the Indian elephant developed in part away from initial reference to origins and repeated insistence on the kingdom's far eastern boundary to a more abstract signifier of the established state, its famous victories and its military identity. Yet India, an extra-imperial land, continued to represent the Seleucid kingdom even down into the mid-second century BC, when the eastern provinces had been lost to the Parthians and the Greco-Bactrians. It is significant that the diminished and declining Seleucid kingdom continued to make use of a system of representation that privileged the exotic and the ethnographic. This is best explained by the prominence of the Indus Treaty, Seleucid–Mauryan relations and Megasthenes' ethnography in the kingdom's pioneering phase, combined with an explicitly historicizing monarchic ideology, that sought in the reign and deeds of the dynastic founder the kingdom's identity.

Notes

- 1 For the historical and autobiographical literature of Alexander's court, see Pearson (1960). For the importance of Herodotus in the Hellenistic period, see Murray (1972).
- 2 The vast majority of scholars (Capdetrey 2007: 42; Habib and Jha 2004: 18; Kartunnen 1997: 72; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1993: 93–7; Thapar 1987: 32–33; Dihle 1984: 76; Zambrini 1982: 71; Murray 1972: 208; Tarn 1951: 41; Schwanbeck 1846: 11–23) place Megasthenes' embassy immediately after the Indus Treaty, at the end of the fourth century or beginning of the third. Bosworth (1996) has argued that Megasthenes' embassy took place in the entirely different geopolitical environment of 319–18 BC, when King Chandragupta had not yet expanded into the Indus. This is implausible for a number of reasons, as I will show elsewhere, not least that the Indus is connected to the Mauryan capital Palimbothra by a single royal road (*FGrH* 715 F6c = Strabo 15.1.11).
- 3 The Seleucid–Mauryan conflict has been treated in some contemporary South Asian historiography as a prototype of the twentieth-century anti-colonial struggle; most astonishing is Parnavitana (1971), a forged Sanskrit account of Chandragupta's victory.
- 4 Just. *Epit.* 15.4.12, 20–1: transitum deinde in Indiam fecit, quae post mortem Alexandri, veluti cervicibus iugo servitutis excusso, praefectos eius occiderat...sic adquisito regno Sandrocottus ea tempestate, qua Seleucus futurae magnitudinis fundamenta iaciebat, Indiam possidebat, cum quo facta pactione Seleucus compositisque in oriente rebus in bellum Antigoni descendit. Strabo 15.2.9: τούτων δ' ἐκ μέρους τῶν παρὰ τὸν Ἰνδὸν ἔχουσί τινα Ἰνδοὶ πρότερον ὄντα Περσῶν, ἃ ἀφείλετο μὲν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος τῶν Ἀριανῶν καὶ κατοικίας ἰδίας συνεστήσατο, ἔδωκε δὲ Σέλευκος ὁ Νικάτωρ Σανδρόκοττω, συνθέμενος ἐπιγαμίαν καὶ ἀντιλαβὼν ἐλέφαντας πεντακοσίους. App. *Syr.* 55: ἀπὸ γὰρ Φρυγίας ἐπὶ ποταμὸν Ἰνδὸν ἄνω πάντα Σελεύκῳ κατήκουε. καὶ τὸν Ἰνδὸν περάσας ἐπολέμησεν Ἀνδροκόττω, βασιλεῖ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν Ἰνδῶν, μέχρι φιλίαν αὐτῷ καὶ κῆδος συνέθετο.

- 5 It is probable that Chandragupta received as wife one of Seleucus' close female relatives. Siebert (1967: 47) has observed that it is more likely that a daughter (or niece) of Seleucus is unknown to us than an Indian wife.
- 6 Just. *Epit.* 15.4.21.
- 7 See, e.g. the Seleucid ambassador Deimachus (*FGrH* 716) at the court of Chandragupta's successor Bindusāra (see Schwartz 1969), and the renewal of diplomatic friendship between Antiochus III and Sophagasenius (Polyb. 11.34).
- 8 Plut. *Demetr.* 28–29; Diod. Sic. 21.1.5.
- 9 Three are of particular importance: Diodorus Siculus 2.35–42, an epitome of the whole; Strabo 15.35–60 (via Eratosthenes' *Geographica*); and Arrian, *Ind.* 1–17. Jewish and Christian authors, such as Josephus, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius, were drawn to the prominence of Nebuchadnezzar II. The paradoxographical or botanic traditions preserved, no doubt second-hand, various *thaumata* (Phlegon, Antigonius of Carystus, Aelian, Pliny).
- 10 *FGrH* 715 F4 = Diod. Sic. 2.38.3–2.39.5; F 12 and F13a = Arr. *Ind.* 7.1–9.8.
- 11 *FGrH* 715 F12 = Arr. *Ind.* 7.2: πάλαι μὲν δὴ νομάδας εἶναι Ἰνδοὺς καθάπερ Σκυθῶν τοὺς οὐκ ἀροτῆρας, οἱ ἐπὶ τῇσιν ἀμάξεισι πλανώμενοι ἄλλοτε ἄλλην τῆς Σκυθίης ἀμείβουσιν, οὔτε πόληας οἰκόντες οὔτε ἱερὰ θεῶν σέβοντες.
- 12 Herodotus discusses the 'non-agricultural [ἀροτῆρες] Scythians' at Hdt. 4.17.
- 13 *FGrH* 715 F12 = Arr. *Ind.* 7.1–9: Διόνυσον δὲ ἐλθόντα, ὥς καρτερὸς ἐγένετο Ἰνδῶν, πόληας τε οἰκίσαι καὶ νόμους θέσθαι τῇσι πόλεσιν, οἶνου τε δοτῆρα Ἰνδοῖς γενέσθαι κατάπερ Ἑλλήσι, καὶ σπεῖρειν διδάξαι τὴν γῆν, διδόντα αὐτὸν σπέρματα...βόας τε ὑπ' ἄροτρον ζεύξει Διόνυσον πρῶτον, καὶ ἀροτῆρας ἀντὶ νομάδων ποιῆσαι Ἰνδῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς, καὶ ὀπλίσαι ὀπλοῖσι τοῖσιν ἀρηίοισι. καὶ θεοὺς σέβειν ὅτι ἐδίδαξε Διόνυσος ἄλλους τε καὶ μάλιστα δὴ ἑωυτὸν κυμβαλίζοντας καὶ τυμπανίζοντας. Diod. Sic. 2.38.5–6 (*FGrH* 715 F4) preserves a parallel account.
- 14 See Cole (1967).
- 15 *FGrH* 715 F4 = Diod. Sic. 39.1; F13b = Arr. *Ind.* 8.6.
- 16 *FGrH* 715 F4 = Diod. Sic. 2.39.1–3.
- 17 Udayin, son or uncle of the famous king Ajātaśatru, moved the capital from Rājagṛha, the setting of the First Buddhist Council, to Pāṭaliputra; see Schwartz (1972: 88).
- 18 *FGrH* 715 F18b = Strabo 15.1.36. Arr. *Ind.* 10.5–6 (*FGrH* 715 F18a) preserves a parallel account.
- 19 Waddell (1903: 21–3).
- 20 *FGrH* F18a = Arr. *Ind.* 10.6.
- 21 Hdt. 3.98.3. Concurrent settled and nomadic populations are found elsewhere in Herodotus: Scythians (4.18, 53), Libyans (4.186, 191) and Persians (1.125).
- 22 Hdt. 4.46.2–3: τῷ δὲ Σκυθικῷ γένει ἐν μὲν τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων προηγμάτων σοφώτατα πάντων ἐξεύρεται τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν, τὰ μέντοι ἄλλα οὐκ ἄγαμαι. Τὸ δὲ μέγιστον οὕτω σφι ἀνεύρηται ὥστε ἀποφυγεῖν τε μηδὲνα ἐπελθόντα ἐπὶ σφέας, μὴ βουλομένους τε ἐξευρεθῆναι καταλαβεῖν μὴ οἶόν τε εἶναι. τοῖσι γὰρ μήτε ἄστυα μήτε τείχεα ἢ ἐκτισμένα, ἀλλὰ φερέοικοι ἐόντες πάντες ἔωσι ἵπποτοξόται, ζῶντες μὴ ἀπ' ἀρότου ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κτηνέων, οἰκήματά τέ σφι ἢ ἐπὶ ζευγέων, κῶς οὐκ ἂν εἴησαν οὗτοι ἄμαχοι τε καὶ ἄποροι προσμίσγειν.
- 23 Hartog (1988: 202).

- 24 FGrH 156 Arr. *Bithynica* F54 = Eustath. ad Dionys. 669, p. 338, 38.
- 25 Diod. Sic. 19.94-100; see the interesting discussion in Bosworth (2002: 187-209).
- 26 Diod. Sic. 2.1.5, 48.6.
- 27 Briant (1982: 19-20).
- 28 Plt. *Prt.* 322b; Diod. Sic. 1.8.2-6; Polyb. 6.5.5; Lucr. 5.982-1010.
- 29 Pl. *Prt.* 322b; Pl. *Leg.* 3.681a; Thuc. 1.2 (city fortification, implicitly). Other models associated the birth of the city with the absence of individual or household self-sufficiency (Pl. *Resp.* 2.369b; Arist. *Pol.* 1.1.7-12) and the centripetal tendency of primitive monarchy (Polyb. 6.5; Lucr. 5.1108-09).
- 30 Arist. *Pol.* 3 1285b3-11, 1310b34 .
- 31 Diod. Sic. 15.72.4; Paus. 8.27.1.
- 32 As demonstrated by the Spartan policy of *dioikismos*, applied to, e.g. Mantinea in 385 BC.
- 33 Demand (1990: 151-5).
- 34 Arr. *Anab.* 7.9.1-5.
- 35 Most obviously the *Enūma eliš*; note the striking similarities with Berossus' *Babyloniaca* (see Kosmin 2013).
- 36 FGrH 715 F3b = Joseph *AJ* 10.227; F1b = Euseb. *Chron.* 1.29; F11a = Strabo 15.1.6; F11b = Arr. *Ind.* 5.4-5. For Seleucus I's participation in Babylonian cult, see Boiy (2004: 277-82).
- 37 FGrH 715 F11a = Strabo 15.1.6-7.
- 38 FGrH 715 F20a = Arr. *Ind.* 13-14; F20b = Strabo 15.1.42-3.
- 39 FGrH 715 F4 = Diod. Sic. 2.35.4.
- 40 FGrH 715 F4 = Diod. Sic. 2.35.4.
- 41 FGrH 715 F19b = Strabo 15.1.40. Note that the *Arthaśāstra*, a work attributed to Chandragupta Maurya's prime minister Kauṭīliya, contains a canonical list of eight royal elephant forests, fashioned from a north Indian geographical perspective.
- 42 FGrH 715 F13a = Arr. *Ind.* 8.7. Tarn (1940: 84-9) has demonstrated that 500 is a stereotyped expression for 'a great number' in Hellenistic Indian literature. The exceptionalism of Pandaea may be an aetiology for the independence from the Mauryan Empire of the Pāndiya kingdom (with its later capital Madurai), on whose coasts the Tuticorin pearl fisheries were located; see Habib and Jha (2004: 90).
- 43 Plut. *Demetr.* 19.3; Diod. Sic. 21.1.2.
- 44 Libanius Or. 11.90.
- 45 Seleucus' action may have been suggested by the howdahs (θωράκια), if they were already in use. For the uses, types and introduction of elephant towers, see Scullard 1974: 240-5.
- 46 In *Zeuxis* (sive *Antiochus*), Lucian explores the problem of audience gratification, explicitly opposing grotesque popular appeal and refined critical approbation. The first part of the *prolalia* discusses Zeuxis' markedly original painting of a female centaur suckling its young, and the artist's displeasure at the audience's response. In the second part, Lucian shows how the Elephant Battle confronts the same problem (an audience's immediate response to novelty) through another strange animal, the elephant. See Romm (1990) for the importance to Lucian of painterly and plastic arts in the generic positioning of his own work. Interestingly, the *prolalia*'s unusual structure (ecphrasis-historical anecdote) echoes the strange fusion of Zeuxis' centaur.
- 47 Lucian, *Zeuxis* 10: εἶποντο δὲ καὶ οἱ ἐλέφαντες συμπατοῦντες καὶ ἀναρριπτοῦντες ταῖς προνομαίαις ἐς ὕψος καὶ συναρπάζοντες καὶ τοῖς

- ὁδοῦσι περιπεύροντες, καὶ τέλος οὔτοι κατὰ κράτος παραδιδόασιν τῷ
 Ἀντιόχῳ τὴν νίκην.
- 48 Lucian, *Zeuxis* 11: ἐπὶ τε τῷ τροπαίῳ κελεύει ἄλλο μηδὲν, ἐλέφαντα δὲ
 μόνον ἐγκολᾶσαι. Cf. Philostratus, *VA* 2.20, who saw elephants on a bronze
 bas-relief, representing Alexander's victory over Porus at Taxila.
- 49 Perhaps the source for Lucian (Bieńkowski 1929: 148). Simonides wrote in the court
 of Antiochus III.
- 50 Steph. Byz. s.v. Βοῦρα. According to Bieńkowski (1929: 148), Pytheas' *floruit*
 (280–40) means that this work undoubtedly commemorated the Elephant Battle.
- 51 See Bieńkowski (1929: 142–50); Rostovtzeff (1941: 432, pl.52).
- 52 See, e.g. Stewart (2004).
- 53 The earliest silver trophy coinage of Susa features, on the obverse, the head of a hero
 (assimilating Seleucus, Alexander and Dionysus), wearing a panther-skin covered
 helmet, adorned with bull's ear and horns, with a panther skin tied around his neck;
 the reverse shows, between the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ, Nike crowning
 a trophy (Houghton and Lorber 2002: cat. #173–6). At Ecbatana, c. 295, the reverse
 of a special silver issue bearing the king's name, in three denominations, depicted a
 Dionysiac hero on horseback (Houghton and Lorber 2002: cat. #203, 213).
- 54 Houghton and Lorber (2002: 6). For identification of figure, see Hadley (1974).
- 55 Babylon, Susa and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris introduced the Ptolemaic type of
 Alexander wearing an elephant-scalp c. 300 (Houghton and Lorber 2002: 7). A
 new and important reverse type, depicting an armed deity (Athena, Artemis)
 in an elephant chariot, was introduced in the mid-290s (Houghton and Lorber
 2002: cat. #130, 131, 132, 133, 156, 157, 158 (Seleucia on the Tigris); #163, 177,
 178 (Susa); #259–63 (Bactra); #272–83 (Ai Khanoum)). Philetaerus of Pergamum
 commemorated Seleucus' victory at Corupedium with an elephant type (Houghton
 and Lorber 2002: cat. #1, 2). Across the empire in the 280s, royal bronzes have
 elephant reverses: Houghton and Lorber (2002: cat. #25, Antioch on the Orontes;
 #35, Apamea on the Orontes; #128, 129, Seleucia on the Tigris; #264, 265, 266,
 Bactra).
- 56 Houghton and Lorber (2002: cat. #183, double Daric, Susa; #219, double Daric,
 Ecbatana).
- 57 Houghton and Lorber (2002: cat. #195, trophy tetradrachm, probably from Persis,
 perhaps Istakhr).
- 58 Houghton and Lorber (2002: 8) suggest that the elephant chariot type was
 introduced to mark the tenth anniversary.
- 59 From the reign of Antiochus I, royal portrait and Apollo typology dominates.
 Elephants appear on royal bronzes of Antiochus I at Smyrna (#312), Antioch on
 the Orontes (#339), Dura Europus (#365, 366) and Susa (#400); of Antiochus II at
 Nisibis (#584); of Seleucus II at Sardis (#662), Nisibis (#753, 754), Seleucia on the
 Tigris (#785), Susa (#797–801) and Ecbatana (#817–21).
- 60 Plut. *Demetr.* 25.4–9; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 823c–e and Athen. *Deipn.* 6.261b.
- 61 The date of the toast turns on the absence of Cassander (d. 298–97) and the
 presence of Antigonus (d. 301): accordingly, a date of 302 (Hauben 1974: 105–17)
 must explain the absence of Cassander; a date of the 290s (Gruen 1985: 260) must
 explain the presence of Antigonus. The more persuasive date is 302: Cassander's
 absence can be explained by his weakness in 302 (Hauben 1974: 112) or by a sort
 of *damnatio*, whereby he was not named in Demetrius' presence (Müller 1973: 89).
 Hauben (1974: 105–17) shows, in addition, the following: Plutarch places the toast

immediately after mention of the League of Corinth; Demetrius officially recognized his opponents after Ipsus (not least in marrying his daughter Stratonice to Seleucus); and Seleucus' elephants would hardly be mocked after the battle. Gruen (1985: 260) objects, in addition to the absence of Cassander, that the anecdote is an excursus and that Agathocles would not have impressed the other dynasts before his conquest of Corcyra in 299 or the marriage of his daughter to Pyrrhus in 295. These points do not hold: Agathocles' war with Carthage would have been unmissable; its failure and the restriction of his rule to Sicily explains τοῦ Σικελιώτου νησιάρχου.

62 For Primo (2009: 232), the title criticizes Seleucus' supposed abdication of his Greco-Macedonian identity

63 *Astronomical Diary* 273 B 30–32: 20 elephants sent from Bactria.

64 102 elephants (Polyb. 5.79.13).

65 1 Macc. 1.17.

66 See Scullard (1974: 124–37).

67 *OGIS* 54: 1–19 = Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography* 2.58–59.

68 *OGIS* 54: 10–13: ἐλεφάντων Τρωγλοδυτικῶν καὶ Αἰθιοπικῶν, οὓς ὁ τε πατήρ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς πρώτο(ι) ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν τούτων ἐθήρευσαν καὶ καταγαγόντες εἰς Αἴγυπτον κατεσκεύασαν πρὸς τὴν πολεμικὴν χρεῖαν.

69 See, above all, Polybius' description of Raphia (5.84).

70 Scullard (1974: 102).

71 Livy 37.59.3.

72 Rome had raised no objection to the elephant (and naval) forces of Antiochus IV; indeed, the Daphne celebration had included a conspicuous procession of the beasts. It is unclear why the Senate suddenly intervened now; see Gruen (1976) and Briscoe (1969).

73 Polyb. 31.2.11: τοὺς ἐλέφαντας νευροκοπήσαι καὶ καθόλου λυμῆνασθαι τὴν βασιλείον δύναμιν. So horrific were the demonstration effects that Leptines of Laodicea assassinated Octavius in the gymnasium, defended the legitimacy of the action and offered to present himself before the Senate (Polyb. 32.2.4–32.3.4). Lysias gave Octavius a decent burial and disclaimed responsibility. Demetrius I sent to Rome Leptines and the *grammaticus* Isocrates, but they were never punished: the Senate preferred that the crime hang over the dynasty. Octavius was commemorated at Rome by a statue on the rostrum: Cic. *Phil.* 9.4; Plin. *HN* 34.24 (a very confused account).

74 1 Macc. 6.37.

75 Avaran, deriving from *hvr* ('to pierce'), is surely a posthumous name, celebrating his stabbing of the elephant.

76 1 Macc. 6.43–46: καὶ εἶδεν Ελεαζαρος ὁ Αβαραν ἐν τῶν θηρίων τεθωρακισμένον θώραξιν βασιλικαῖς, καὶ ἦν ὑπεράγον πάντα τὰ θηρία, καὶ ᾤκηθη ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστὶν ὁ βασιλεὺς· καὶ ἔδωκεν ἑαυτὸν τοῦ σῶσαι τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ περιποιῆσαι ἑαυτῷ ὄνομα αἰώνιον· καὶ ἐπέδραμεν αὐτῷ θράσει εἰς μέσον τῆς φάλαγγος καὶ ἐθανάτου δεξιὰ καὶ εὐώνυμα, καὶ ἐσχίζοντο ἅπ' αὐτοῦ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα· καὶ εἰσέδου ὑπὸ τὸν ἐλέφαντα καὶ ὑπέθηκεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνείλεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀπέθανεν ἐκεῖ.

77 Joseph. *BJ* 1.42–5. For Josephus' use of Nicolaus of Damascus, see Primo (2009: 225). At *AJ* 12.373–75, Josephus reproduces the 1 Macc. account.

78 Memnon (*FGrH* 434 F8.8) reports that Ptolemy Ceraunus, having murdered Seleucus I and claimed his inheritance, marched against the Galatians on the back

of an elephant: ζῶν γὰρ ἐλήφθη, τοῦ ἐλέφαντος, ἐν ᾧ ὠχεῖτο, τρωθέντος καὶ καταβαλόντος αὐτόν. This must be considered a performance of legitimate Seleucid kingship. Although the account of Eleazar's heroism does not feature in 2 Maccabees (13:15), Jason of Cyrene's epitomator records a comparable episode, in which Judas Maccabaeus, having raided the Seleucid army camp at night and killed up to 2000 men, stabbed the leading elephant (together with its mahout): ἀνείλεν εἰς ἄνδρας δισχιλίους, καὶ τὸν πρωτεύοντα τῶν ἐλεφάντων σὺν τῷ κατ' οἰκίαν ὄντι συνέθηκεν.

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Monstrous Aetolians and Aetolian Monsters – A Politics of Ethnography?

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The Aetolians, a Greek *ethnos* holding vast parts of western Greece, north to the Gulf of Corinth, were often accused by Greek or Roman authors of being a barbarian or half-barbarian people. In a world in which similarity or proximity to the Greeks was the greatest thinkable distinction that might be allowed to non-Greeks, such a charge against a Greek people was extremely contemptuous, and placed the Aetolians low in the imaginary hierarchy of Greek *ethne*. Some other authors, who did not share this extreme opinion about the Aetolians, considered them simply as the most backward of the Greeks. It was generally felt for a long time that the Aetolians were not particularly popular in antiquity, but the scale and completeness of their denigration became obvious after Claudia Antonetti published her study on the persistence of Aetolia's negative stereotypes into Late Antiquity.¹

From today's point of view, however, with our knowledge of the Aetolian dialect, customs and material culture in comparison with Greek contemporaries, the Aetolians were not different (or were not much different) from most of Greece.² Modern commentators therefore reject ancient charges of barbarism against the Aetolians. Their backwardness, however, is a different matter. We are in a way progress-obsessed, and rarely hesitate to label the Aetolians as culturally retarded in comparison to the majority of Greeks, at least in the pre-Hellenic age.³

Still, while doing this, we are in the best possible company. The clearest statement, and also the most famous one, on the Aetolian backwardness comes from Thucydides (3.94.4-5).⁴ In this chapter the historian repeats, in reported speech, arguments, which – put forward by the Messenians from Naupactus – convince the Athenians to invade Aetolia. Usually, this passage is analyzed together with another famous passage in Thucydides' *Archeology*, in which the great historian makes a comparison between Greeks from Aetolia, western Locris, Acarnania and Epirus, who lived in an old-fashioned way, and the more civilized Greeks from the Aegean, Peloponnesus and colonies (1.5.3–1.6.2). Thucydides' views as expressed in the *Archeology*, and so his anthropology of Greek peoples, may be influenced by a portrait of Aetolians in Book III.

The comments in the *Archeology* may be contrasted with the emotional description in Book III. The latter offers more than just another statement of Aetolian material and cultural backwardness, but also comprises malicious remarks about one of the Aetolian tribes as speakers of unintelligible language and eaters of raw meat. The unintelligible idiom is clearly a barbarian feature, and the omophagy, which is animal by nature, may also be one of the barbarian traits.⁵ As such, both features of the Aetolians, quoted by Thucydides after the Messenians from Naupactus, are today understood as elements of Aetolia's black legend, and believed to have originated outside Aetolia, in the minds of her enemies.

On the other hand, this semi-barbarian image of the Aetolians was hardly an ancient stereotype, and when the Greeks thought of the bad features of 'the Aetolian race', traits such as greediness, gluttony, inclination to violent acts and piracy came first to mind.⁶ These features (and not the barbarism) were also typical negative stereotypes among the Greeks – a glance at the main traits of the Boeotian communities in Heraclides Creticus' depiction may provide a handy list of possible bad sides of Greek collective nature. This list is instructive, since the Boeotians seem to be especially vulnerable to the ancient 'belittlement' – let us compare how the Thebans were repeatedly blamed for *medismos* in the fourth century BC and how Sparta, which had made several deals with the Persians, including the King's Peace, remained a 'Teflon empire'. Clearly, the Boeotians were for Heraclides the 'bad guys' of Greece, and it is noticeable that the Aetolians shared most of the bad traits of their collective personality with Heraclides' Boeotian cities. The most important difference is that whereas in Boeotia one city was distinguished by one particular fault, the Aetolians were blamed collectively for all or most of these weaknesses.

There is a temptation, therefore, to suppose that the Aetolians were victims of more or less systematic denigration, too, and the charges of semi-barbarism against them may originate from political conflicts, in which the Aetolian Confederacy participated.

Certainly, such propaganda rivalries frequently refer to the past and to tradition, which can be historical or mythical. Generally speaking, the Greeks differentiated little between these two layers of the past, and it would be safer to introduce the third, intermediate level of the tradition of the past, which is a mixture of exact historical knowledge and myth. The consciousness of the non-Greek or pre-Greek past of Greece, widespread among the Hellenes, is an important element of this kind of tradition. Moreover, in several regions of Greece, old, not-purely human or at least not-purely Greek heroes were incorporated into the local halls of fame (Dryops may serve as a good example). Generally, however, all these non-Greeks or non-humans belong to the remote past. We cannot observe any concentration of such beings in the areas more remote from the cultural centres of Greece, and Athens, with the monstrous Erechtheus and Erichthionios as her kings, expressing the Athenian claim to autochthony, might be an interesting example of how the myth was exploited politically (this particular myth was – needless to say – exploited both internally and externally with great success due to the power of the Athenian *polis*). In narratives belonging to the historical times, things change: mythical heroes and gods are displaced far away (Nyssa of Dionysus' boyhood wandering eastwards may be a good example), mysterious caves and passes from the Earth to the Underworld are

gradually less often located in Greece. Still, use of *miracula* tempted Greek politicians (epiphanies of gods and goddesses in wartime are the best known examples), even if it became more difficult to exploit such miracles or legends.

The peoples on the fringe of Hellenic world were privileged to use this device more effectively. Thus, the Macedonians could fabricate their court stories more easily than the Greeks of the *polis* (we are invariably confused in front of fantastic, scandalous and often conflicting family traditions from Aegae and Pella). No doubt, such stories were sometimes invented or built on exaggeration in southern Greece, yet it was in the Macedonian interest to play an active part in writing and disseminating corrected versions of these images.⁷

I believe that the Aetolians, too, were able to reshape or exploit better sided of their stereotype among other Greeks. They created a number of stories answering anti-Aetolian prejudices in Greece. Thus, their uniqueness, ferocity and gluttony seem to be balanced by the story of Titormus, the strongest of the Greeks, challenged by the famous Milo of Croton. Alluded to by Athenaeus (10.4.13)⁸ and Eustathius (1.198),⁹ it was recounted in full by Aelian (*VH* 12.22):

Milo of Croton, boasting about the strength of his body, once met Titormus the shepherd, they say. Seeing that Titormus was a big man, he felt inclined to make a trial of his strength. Titormus had said that he is not extremely strong, and having thrown off his himation descended to the Euenus River, and laid hands on a very large stone. He pushed this stone towards himself, and then pushed it away. Having repeated it twice or thrice, he lifted it towards his knees and then to the shoulders. Then he made eight steps carrying it and finally threw it away. Milo, however, could scarcely move it. One more feat performed by Titormus: he approached his herd, and, having stopped in the middle, took hold of the largest bull by the hoof (and this bull was wild). It tried to run away but was unable. Then, another bull passed by, and Titormus, with the other hand, caught a leg of the second bull. Milo held up his hands towards the sky and said: 'O Zeus, have you sent us the second Heracles in this man?' One claims that hence the proverb: 'This is another Heracles!'¹⁰

All these authors agree that there was a tradition showing Titormus as the strongest man ever living, stronger even than Milo. Athenaeus indicates that his source was Alexander of Aetolia, the country's only well-known poet, and – as a leader of the Pleiad – one of most important poets of the early Hellenistic Age. Since Athenaeus' mention of Titormus having caught and kept a bull on an account of Milo's appetite makes sense only in conjunction with the story told by Aelian; we can be certain that both Athenaeus and Aelian found the duel story in Alexander of Aetolia, for whom this episode was another way to increase the glory of his fatherland. Yet, Titormus was not invented by Alexander of Aetolia. The oldest mention is Herodotus' account of the Agariste's wedding (*Hdt.* 6.127),¹¹ which means that Titormus must have been well known in the fifth century BC. The Aetolian poet makes Titormus the contemporary of Milo, and thus places him in the second half of the sixth century BC. The wedding of Agariste is significantly an earlier event (dated in the 570s BC), and it is impossible to treat both traditions as reflecting any historical reality. Rather, already in the age of

Herodotus, Titormus was chiefly a legendary character. It seems that Herodotus used his person as a convenient reference, which evoked in the minds of his audience some basic judgements concerning the purported ethnic character of the Aetolians.

Claudia Antonetti rightly saw in Titormus a national symbol of Aetolia, but did not manage to explain how elements which usually form a generally unpleasant view of an *ethnos* in Greek eyes (especially savagery, pastoral life and inhuman traits like gluttony, which might be close to Thucydidean omophagy) could produce the rather sympathetic character of Titormus. Of course, Titormus is in no way a monster. However, some of his individual features make him inhuman and monstrous in a sense. His enormous strength made him the best-known 'second Heracles' in Greek history, but far more interesting for us is his remoteness from other people, and his dwelling in the most remote parts of peripheral Aetolia. His gluttony may fit well a Greek athlete's stereotype, yet a victory over the strongest of Olympic wrestlers, Milo of Croton, in an irregular Greek duel escapes this stereotype. The story says that originally both competitors met in a quite common weightlifting contest, somewhere on the banks of the Euenos River. Titormus, as the victor, turned this contest into a show of his enormous strength, and displayed his superhuman qualities by throwing heavy rocks or catching and holding wild bulls with one hand only. Although Milo praises Titormus as the second Heracles, another appealing comparison would seem to be the Cyclopes.

There is little doubt that Titormus was an Aetolian hero, and that the story told in Aelian, together with the main traits of the strongman's personality, was created in Aetolia. Despite Herodotus' stress on Titormus' remoteness from the centres of civilization, a tradition based on a local author has more details on the geographical setting of Titormus' story, making him a shepherd on the banks of the River Euenus, which was a particularly unapproachable river due to numerous gorges. Certainly, this story exploited a traditional picture of Aetolia as a mountainous country without large urban centres. Rocks lifted by both athletes, in no way a usual feature of weightlifting, underscored the uncivilized or even semi-human character of the contest, and fits well with the stereotypical (and real) Aetolian landscape. It is tempting to conclude that the Aetolians (certainly in the late fourth/early third century BC, and perhaps also earlier) were interested in presenting themselves as distant from, and wilder than, other Greeks. This was their (initially approving) response to negative prejudices towards the Aetolians, which indeed meant a recasting of Titormus' story.

Still less known is a story of Polycritus, a leading politician of the Hellenistic Confederacy (anachronistically called *Aetolarch* by our sources). This story is found in two texts: the first is Phlegon of Tralles' *Book of Marvels* 2 = FGrH 257 F 36 and the second is Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II.115.

Phlegon says that he took the story from Hieron (either from Ephesus or Alexandria). The story should be quoted in full:

1. Hieron of Alexandria or of Ephesus relates that a ghost also appeared in Aetolia.
2. One of the citizens, a certain Polycritus, was voted Aetolarch for a term

of three years by the people, who deemed him worthy among the citizens because of his and his ancestors' nobility. While in office he took a Locrian woman as wife, lived with her for three nights, and departed from life on the fourth night.

3. The woman remained at home as a widow. When the time for childbirth came she delivered a child with two sets of genitals, male and female, which differed amazingly in their nature. The upper portion of the genitals was hard and manly, whereas the part around this was womanish and softer.
4. Struck with astonishment the child's relatives took it to the agora where they called an assembly, summoned sacrificers and diviners and deliberated about the child. Of these, some declared that a breach would come about the Aetolians and the Locrians, for the infant had been separated from its mother, who was a Locrian, and its father, an Aetolian. Others thought that they should take the child and the mother away to the countryside beyond the frontiers and burn them.
5. As they were deliberating, Polycritus, the man who had previously died, appeared in the assembly near the child and wearing black clothing.
6. The citizens were stricken with amazement at the apparition and many had begun to flee when he called on them to take courage and not be thrown into confusion at the presence of the ghost.

After he had put a stop to most of the commotion and confusion, he spoke in a soft voice, as follows: 'Citizens, my body is dead, but in the goodwill and kindness I feel towards you I am alive. I am here with you now for your benefit, having appealed to those who are master of the things beneath the earth. And so I call on you now, since you are fellow citizens, not to be frightened or repulsed by the unexpected presence of a ghost. I beg all of you, praying by the salvation of each of you, to hand over to me the child I begot, in order that no violence take place as a result of your reaching some other decision and that your hostility towards me not be the beginning of difficult and harsh problems. For it is not permitted me to let the child be burnt by you, just because of the madness of the seers who have made a proclamation to you.

'Now, I excuse you because as you behold so strange a sight you are at a loss as to what is the right course of action for you to take. If, moreover, you will obey me without fear, you will be released from your present fear as well as the impending catastrophe. But if you come to some other opinion, I fear that because of your distrust of me you will fall into an irremediable calamity. Now because of the goodwill I had when I was alive, I have also now in this my present unexpected appearance foretold what is beneficial to you. So I ask you not to put me off any longer but to deliberate correctly and, obeying what I have said, to give me the child in an auspicious manner. For it is not permitted me to linger long on account of those who rule beneath the earth.'

7. After saying this he was quiet for a little while, expectantly awaiting whatever resolution they would bring forth concerning his request. Now, some

thought they should hand over the child and make atonement for both the prodigy and the supernatural being that was standing by, but most disagreed, saying that they ought not to deliberate rashly, since the matter was of great importance and the problem was not an ordinary one.

8. Seeing that they were not heeding him but instead were hindering his desire, he spoke again: 'At all events, citizens, if trouble befalls you on account of your irresolution, blame not me but the fate that thus leads you down the wrong path, a fate that, opposing me also, forces me to act unlawfully against my own child.'
9. The people had clustered together and were arguing about the portent when the ghost took hold of the child, forced back most of the men, hastily tore the child limb from limb, and begun to devour him.
10. People began to shout and throw stones at him in an attempt to drive him away. Unharmd by the stones, he consumed the entire body of the boy except for his head, and then suddenly disappeared.
11. The people, vexed at these happenings and in a state of extraordinary perplexity, wanted to send a delegation to Delphi, but the head of the boy that was lying on the ground began to speak, foretelling the future in an oracle.

O countless folk inhabiting a land famed in song,
 Do not go to the sanctuary of Phoibos, to the temple with its incense,
 For the hands you hold in the air are unclean from blood,
 The journey before your feet is defiled.
 Renounce the journey to the tripod, and consider instead what I say,
 For I will recount the entire behest of the oracle.
 On this day in the course of a year
 Death has been ordained for all, but by the will of Athena
 The souls of Locrians and Aetolians shall live mixed together.
 Nor shall there be a respite from evil, not even briefly,
 For a bloody drizzle is poured on your heads,
 Night keeps everything hidden, and a dark sky has spread over it,
 At once night causes a darkness to move over the entire earth,
 ...

All the gods will render inglorious the birth
 Of whatever remains of Aetolian and Locrian seed,
 Because death has not touched my head, nor has it done away
 With all the indistinguishable limbs of my body but has left me on the
 earth.

Come and expose my head to the rising dawn, and
 Do not hide it below within the dusky earth.
 As for you yourselves, abandon the land and
 Go to another land, to a people of Athena,
 If you choose an escape from death in accordance with fate.

12. When the Aetolians heard the oracle they brought their wives, infant children and very elderly to such places of safety as each man was able to

arrange. They themselves remained behind, awaiting what would occur and it happened in the following year that the Aetolians and Acarnanians joined battle, with great destruction on both sides. (Translation by W. Hansen, with some adjustment.)¹²

Phlegon's Polycritus dies on the fourth day after marrying a West-Locrian girl. Nine months later his widow gives birth to a hermaphrodite. This ominous event is deliberated on at the general assembly of the Aetolians. When a proposal to burn the mother and the baby begins to prevail, the ghost of Polycritus appears before the assembly. Originally, the ghost tries to persuade the people not to burn his offspring, yet – unable to convince his co-citizens – he captures his child, then tears it into pieces, and eats it except for the head. When Polycritus escapes, the head is still alive and gives a prophecy to the assembled people, this time concerning the conflicts between Aetolia and Acarnania and the eternal character of union between the Aetolians and the Locrians.

This story attracts some attention as a narrative or as an illustration of Greek beliefs in afterlife, but is rather neglected by ancient historians, who usually feel content with a statement of anachronisms in Phlegon's narrative (such as otherwise unknown *aitolarchia* as the highest magistrature of the Aetolian Confederacy).¹³ The version of the story in Proclus is much shorter and is deprived of most of the horror scenes of Phlegon, and as such attracts even less attention:

Naumachius of Epirus, a contemporary of our grandfathers, recounts that Polycritus, an Aetolian, being the most distinguished of Aetolians and having achieved the leadership in Aetolia [*aitolarchia*] deceased and resurrected in the ninth month after his death. He arrived at [a] general assembly of the Aetolians and made the best counsels concerning the disputed issues. Witnesses of that are also Hieron of Ephesus and other historians writing to the King Antigonus and their other friends, who were far away.¹⁴

Proclus himself claims to take this story from a certain Naumachius of Epirus, who was a contemporary of his grandparents.¹⁵ Still, as an alternative source of the story he mentions Hieron of Ephesus, too. Contrary to Phlegon, Proclus knows that Hieron of Ephesus included this story in a letter to King Antigonus and his friends.¹⁶

The first question to consider about this episode, which is not merely a piece of fiction, concerns its date. Joseph Scholten thinks that the story reflects an internecine conflict in Aetolia over relations with Acarnania in the mid-third century BC, and identifies Polycritus as a well-known general active at that time, Polycritus of Callium (also the *strategos* of the isopolity and alliance between Aetolia and Acarnania, IG IX.1, 3a).¹⁷ Also Michael Crawford, noting the uniqueness of the name in Aetolia, suspects that the real Polycritus of Callium was notorious in antiquity for plundering the sanctuary of Poseidon at Mantinea. The latter event may be dated to c. 240 BC, so perhaps he lived well into the reign of Demetrius II, and thus a link between real Polycritus and the character in Phlegon's account would be very distant indeed.¹⁸ The argument based on the absence of other Aetolian Polycriti in the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* may be also balanced by numerous West Locrians by this name – one

may ask whether the Locrians saw in this name a warranty for their Aetolian status, which they cherished so much from the third century BC to the second century AD at least. I would think, however, that the freshness of the Aetolian–Locrian links, which is underscored in the story so strongly, seems to exclude a date later than the earliest years of the third century BC.

It has been suggested that the letter of Hieron was a piece of fiction, but I see reasons that compel us to believe that the story was not taken directly from Hieron, but rather from Hieronymus of Cardia. It has been noted that both surviving versions agree on the fact of Polycritus' appearance before the Aetolian assembly. Moreover, although repeating the same anachronistic name of the Aetolian as the chief magistrature (*aitolarchia*), Proclus names the Aetolian assembly in a very unique way, classifying it as the *koine ekklesia*. If we set aside the Christian usage and the Lycian federal documents, this phrase is rarely found in the Greek literature. It occurs infrequently outside Diodorus' *Library*, and there mainly in Books XVI and XVIII–XX. A few attestations elsewhere seem to trace back to the same sources Diodorus exploited, which were the histories by Ephorus of Kyme (very likely) or Hieronymus of Cardia (almost certainly). Since our story is set in the early Hellenistic period, Hieronymus may be considered as the author behind Polycritus' story.¹⁹ Once we have assumed Hieronymus being the original source, we must agree with those previous students of Polycritus' story who think that the Antigonus mentioned as the addressee of Hieron was the very first one, that is, Antigonus the One-Eyed.²⁰ We should also admit that such stories are really uncommon in ancient historiography, and especially in the historians we consider as trustworthy. Hieronymus is – needless to say – one of those held in the highest esteem by modern scholars, and I am not aware of any other piece of information taken from Hieronymus that would be an obvious fiction.²¹ He was likely to have at his disposal an original letter from Hieron, and the story as told in the Hieronymus-based books XVIII–XX of Diodorus might be identified as coming from Hieronymus' fellow-companions of Antigonus.²²

I am inclined to think that the story of Polycritus, as we know it from Phlegon and Proclus, was for Hieronymus' sober mind an example of the aberration of Aetolian propaganda.²³ Actually, I am not sure who was the target group of this story. Here the most important issue is how Hieron of Ephesus got knowledge of Polycritus' history. He might have heard a folk tale disclosed by chance by superstitious highlanders, and decided to repeat a freaky story in a letter to his king and his friends. If so, the target group of the Polycritus episode would have been the Aetolians on the eve of another war against Acarnania, but I cannot say if it worked as well as one of the Aetolian national myths on Titormus. Another possibility is that the story was reported to Hieron of Ephesus by his Aetolian informants, and was primarily intended to frighten and impress foreigners entering Aetolia. Most likely, however, the inventors of such stories aimed at both consolidating the Aetolian *ethnos* and impressing foreigners.

To conclude, the stories of Polycritus and Titormus indicate that the Aetolians of the early Hellenistic age were fully aware of their negative ethnic stereotypes, and tried to bypass them by telling even more fantastic stories about themselves. This may be called a politics of ethnography, another strategy used by the Aetolian elites to improve their image among the Greeks.

Notes

- 1 Antonetti (1990: 43–143).
- 2 Funke (1991: 125–36); Funke (1997: 145–88).
- 3 Just to restrict discussion to a selection of the more influential of the newer encyclopedias, syntheses and textbooks: Larsen (1968: 48); Walbank (1984: 234); Rhodes (2007: 286); Murray (1996: 31).
- 4 τὸ γὰρ ἔθνος μέγα μὲν εἶναι τὸ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν καὶ μάχιμον, οἰκοῦν δὲ κατὰ κώμας ἀτειχίστους, καὶ ταύτας διὰ πολλοῦ, καὶ σκευὴ ψιλῇ χρώμενον οὐ χαλεπὸν ἀπέβαινον, πρὶν ξυμβοηθῆσαι, καταστραφῆναι. ἐπιχειρεῖν δ' ἐκέλευον πρῶτον μὲν Ἀποδωτοῖς, ἔπειτα δὲ Ὀφιονεῦσι καὶ μετὰ τοῦ τους Εὐρυτάσιν, ὅπερ μέγιστον μέρος ἐστὶ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν, ἀγνωστότατοι δὲ γλῶσσαν καὶ ὠμοφάγοι εἰσίν, ὥς λέγονται. ('The Aetolian nation, although numerous and warlike, yet dwelt in unwalled villages scattered far apart, and had nothing but light armour, and might, according to the Messenians, be subdued without much difficulty before succours could arrive. The plan which they recommended was to attack first the Apodotians, next the Ophionians, and after these the Eurytians, who are the largest tribe in Aetolia, and speak, as is said, a language exceedingly difficult to understand, and eat their flesh raw').
- 5 Cf. Paul Kosmin's contribution to this volume, p. 97.
- 6 Antonetti (1990: 142).
- 7 Perhaps the best illustration of this very ability of the Macedonian court was the politics of polygamy practised by the Macedonian kings. On this issue, see Ogden (1999).
- 8 Athen. X.413ef: 'Milo of Croton, as Theodorus of Hierapolis says in the treatise On the games, used to eat twenty minae of meat and the same number of breads, he also drank three bottles of wine. In Olympia, he had put a four-year bull on his shoulders and having walked with him a stadium he ate him alone within one day. And Titormus of Aetolia ate an ox in competition with him, as Alexander of Aetolia records.' (Μίλων δ' ὁ Κροτωνιάτης, ὥς φησιν ὁ Ἱεραπολίτης Θεόδωρος ἐν τοῖς περὶ ἀγώνων, ἥσθιε μνᾶς κρεῶν εἴκοσι καὶ τοσαύτας ἄρτων οἶνου τε τρεῖς χοᾶς ἐπινενὲν δὲ Ὀλυμπία ταῦρον ἀναθέμενος τοῖς ὁμοῖς τετραέτη καὶ τοῦτον περιενέγκας τὸ στάδιον μετὰ ταῦτα δαιτρεύσας μόνος αὐτὸν κατέφαγεν ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ. Τίτορμος τε ὁ Αἰτωλὸς διηριστήσατο αὐτῷ βοῦν, ὥς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Αἰτωλὸς Ἀλέξανδρος.)
- 9 'They say that Titormus the Italian [i.e. Aetolian] ate an ox in competition with him. The same was written by Athenaeus. Yet one can know from other sources that Titormus was stronger than Milo.' (καὶ Τίτορμος δὲ φασιν ὁ Ἰταλὸς διηριστήσατο ἑαυτῷ βοῦν ὥς καὶ αὐτὸ γράφει Ἀθήναιος.)
- 10 Aelian, VH 12, 22: Τίτορμω φασὶ τῷ βουκόλῳ περιτυχεῖν τὸν Κροτωνιάτην Μίλωνα, μεγαλοφρονούντα διὰ τὴν ῥώμην τοῦ σώματος. θεασάμενος οὖν μέγαν τὸν Τίτορμον τὸ σῶμα ἰδεῖν, ἐβούλετο λαβεῖν αὐτοῦ ἰσχύος πείραν. ὁ δὲ Τίτορμος ἔλεγε μηδὲν μέγα ἰσχύειν, καταβάς δὲ ἐς τὸν Εὐννον καὶ θοιμάτιον ἀποδύς λίθον λαμβάνει μέγιστον, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἔλκει αὐτὸν πρὸς ἑαυτόν, εἶτα ἀπωθεῖ, καὶ δις καὶ τρις τοῦτο ἐποίησε, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτὸν ἦγεν ἕως ἐς τὰ γόνατα, καὶ τέλος ἀράμενος ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων ἔφερεν ὅσον ἐπ' ὀργυιᾶς ὀκτώ καὶ ἑρριψεν· ὁ δὲ Κροτωνιάτης

Μίλων μόλις τὸν λίθον ἐκίνησεν. εἶτα ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγέλην ἦλθε, καὶ στὰς ἐν μέσῳ τὸν μέγιστον ταῦρον ἄγριον ὄντα λαμβάνει τοῦ ποδός· καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀποδρᾶναι ἔσπευδεν, οὐ μὴν ἐδύνατο. παριόντα δὲ ἕτερον τῇ ἐτέρᾳ χειρὶ συναρπάσας τοῦ ποδός ὁμοίως εἶχε. θεασάμενος δὲ ὁ Μίλων ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν τὰς χεῖρας τείνας ἔφατο ‘ὦ Ζεῦ, μὴ τοῦτον Ἡρακλῆ ἡμῖν ἕτερον ἔσπειρας;’ ἐντεῦθεν ῥηθῆναι λέγουσι τὴν παροιμίαν ‘ἄλλος οὗτος Ἡρακλῆς.’ Cf. also *VH* 14, 47.

- 11 ‘From Aetolia came Males, the brother of that Titormus who stood out above the Greeks with regard to his strength, and fled from the sight of men to the most remote parts of the Aetolian land.’ (Αἰτωλὸς δὲ ἦλθε Τιτόρμου τοῦ ὑπερφύντος τε Ἑλλήνας ἰσχυὶ καὶ φυγόντος ἀνθρώπους ἐς τὰς ἐσχατίας τῆς Αἰτωλίδος χώρας, τούτου τοῦ Τιτόρμου ἀδελφεὸς Μάλης.)
- 12 Phlegon of Tralles’ *Book of Marvels* 2 = *FGrH* 257 F 36: Ἰστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Τέρων ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ἡ Ἐφέσιος καὶ ἐν Αἰτωλίᾳ φάσμα γενέσθαι. Πολύκριτος γάρ τις τῶν πολιτῶν ἐχειροτονήθη ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου Αἰτωλάρχης, ἐπὶ τρία ἔτη τῶν πολιτῶν αὐτὸν ἀξιωσάντων διὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐκ προγόνων καλοκαγαθίαν. ὦν δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ ταύτῃ ἄγεται γυναικα Λοκρίδα, καὶ συγκοιμηθεὶς τρισὶν νυξὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὸν βίον ἐξέλιπεν. ἡ δὲ ἀνθρωπος ἔμενεν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ χηρεύουσα. ἡνίκα δὲ ὁ τοκετὸς ἠπειγεν, τίκτει (παιδίον αἰδοῖα ἔχον δύο, ἀνδρεῖόν τε καὶ γυναικεῖον, καὶ τὴν φύσιν θανμισαντῶς διηλλαγμένον· τὰ μὲν <γὰρ> ἄνω τοῦ αἰδοίου σκληρὰ τε καὶ ἀνδρῶδη ἦν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τοὺς μηροὺς γυναικεῖα καὶ ἀπαλώτερα. (2) ἐφ’ ὧι καταπλαγέντες οἱ συγγενεῖς ἀπῆνεγκαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν τὸ παιδίον καὶ συναγαγόντες ἐκκλησίαν ἐβουλευόντο περὶ αὐτοῦ, θύτας τε καὶ τερατοσκόπους συγκαλέσαντες. τῶν δὲ οἱ μὲν ἀπεφῆναντο διάστασιν τινα τῶν Αἰτωλῶν καὶ Λοκρῶν ἔσεσθαι (κεχωρίσθαι γὰρ ἀπὸ μητρὸς οὐσῆς Λοκρίδος καὶ πατρὸς Αἰτωλοῦ), οἱ δὲ δεῖν ὦιοντο τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα ἀπενεγκόντας εἰς τὴν ὑπερορίαν κατακαῦσαι. (3) ταῦτα δὲ αὐτῶν βουλ<ευ>ομένων ἐξαίφνης φαίνεται ὁ Πολύκριτος ὁ προτεθνηκὼς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πλησίον τοῦ τέκνου ἔχων ἐσθῆτα μέλαιναν. τῶν δὲ πολιτῶν καταπλαγέντων ἐπὶ τῇ φαντασίᾳ καὶ πολλῶν εἰς φυγὴν τραπομένων παρεκάλεσε τοὺς πολίτας θαρρεῖν καὶ μὴ ταράττεσθαι ἐπὶ τῷ γεγονότι φάσματι. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔληξε τὸ πλεον τοῦ θορύβου καὶ τῆς ταραχῆς, ἐφθέγγατο λεπτῇ τῇ φωνῇ τάδε· (4) ‘ἐγώ, ἄνδρες πολῖται, τῷ μὲν σώματι τέθνηκα, τῇ δὲ εὐνοίᾳ καὶ τῇ χάριτι <τῇ> πρὸς ὑμᾶς ζῶ. καὶ νῦν πάρεμι πρὸς ὑμᾶς <παραιτησάμενος> τοὺς κυριεύοντας τῶν κατὰ γῆν ἐπὶ τῷ συμφέροντι τῷ ὑμετέρῳ. παρακαλῶ τοῖνυν ὑμᾶς, πολίτας ὄντας ἐμοῦ, τοῦ μὴ ταράττεσθαι μηδὲ δυσχεραίνειν ἐπὶ τῷ παραδόξῳ γεγονότι φάσματι. δέομαι δὲ ὑμῶν ἀπάντων, κατευχόμενος πρὸς τῆς ἐκάστου σωτηρίας, ἀποδοῦναι μοι τὸ παιδίον τὸ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γεγεννημένον, ὅπως μὴδὲν βίαιον γένηται ἄλλο τι βουλευσαμένων ὑμῶν μὴδ’ ἀρχὴ πραγμάτων δυσχερῶν καὶ χαλεπῶν διὰ τὴν πρὸς ἐμὲ φιλονεικίαν ὑμῖν γένηται. οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται μοι περιδεῖν κατακαυθὲν τὸ παιδίον ὑφ’ ὑμῶν διὰ τὴν τῶν ἐξαγγελλόντων ὑμῖν μάντεων ἀποπληξίαν. συγγνώμην μὲν οὖν ὑμῖν ἔχω, ὅτι τοιαύτην ὄψιν ἀπροσδόκητον ἑωρακότες ἀπορεῖτε πῶς ποτε τοῖς παροῦσι πράγμασιν ὀρθῶς χρήσεσθε. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐμοὶ πεισθίσησθε ἀδεῶς, τῶν παρόντων φόβων καὶ τῶν ἐπερχομένων κακῶν ἔσεσθε ἀπηλλαγμένοι. εἰ δὲ ἄλλως πῶς τῇ γνώμῃ προπεσεῖσθε, φοβοῦμαι περὶ

ὕμῶν μήποτε ἀνηκέστους συμφορὰς ἀπειθοῦντες ἡμῖν ἐμπέσῃτε. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν διὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσιν εὐνοίαν ὅτ' ἔζων καὶ νῦν ἀπροσδοκίῃτως παρὼν προείρηκα τὸ συμφέρον ὑμῖν. ταῦτ' οὖν ὑμᾶς ἀξιῶ μὴ πλείω με χρόνον παρέλκειν, ἀλλὰ βουλευσαμένους ὀρθῶς καὶ πεισθέντας τοῖς εἰρημένοις ὑπ' ἐμοῦ δοῦναι μοι μετ' εὐφημίας τὸ παιδίον. οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται μοι πλείονα μηκύνειν χρόνον διὰ τοὺς κατὰ γῆν ὑπάρχοντας δεσπότας'. (5) ταῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν ἡσυχίαν ἔσχεν ἐπ' ὀλίγον, καραδοκῶν ποῖαν ποτὲ ἐξοίσουσιν αὐτῷ γνώμην περὶ τῶν ἀξιουμένων. τινὲς μὲν οὖν ὥιοντο δεῖν ἀποδοῦναι τὸ παιδίον καὶ ἀφοσιώσασθαι τὸ τε φάσμα καὶ τὸν ἐπιστάντα δαίμονα, οἱ δὲ πλείστοι ἀντέλεγον, ἐπὶ σχολῇς δεῖν βουλεύεσθαι φάσκοντες, ὥς ὄντος μεγάλου τοῦ πράγματος καὶ οὐ τῆς τυχούσης αὐτοῖς ἀπορίας. (6) συνιδὼν δὲ αὐτοὺς οὐ προσέχοντας ἀλλ' ἐμποδίζοντας αὐτοῦ τὴν βούλησιν, ἐφθέγγατο αὐθις τάδε· 'ἀλλ' οὖν γε, ὦ ἄνδρες πολῖται, ἐὰν ὑμῖν συμβαίνει τι τῶν δυσχερεστέρων διὰ τὴν ἀβουλίαν, μὴ ἐμὲ αἰτιάσθε ἀλλὰ τὴν τύχην τὴν οὕτως ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον ὑμᾶς ποδηγοῦσαν, ἣτις ἐναντιουμένη κάμοι παρανομεῖν ἀναγκάζει με εἰς τὸ ἴδιον τέκνον'. (7) τοῦ δὲ ὄχλου συνδραμόντος καὶ περὶ τὴν ἄρσιν τοῦ τέρατος ἔχοντος, ἐπιλαβόμενος τοῦ παιδίου καὶ τοὺς πλείστους αὐτῶν ἀνείρξας ἱταμώτερον διέσπασέ τε αὐτὸ καὶ ἥσθιε. κραυγῇς δὲ γενομένης καὶ λίθων ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐκρίπτομένων ὑπελάμβανον τροσὴν αὐτοῦ ποιήσασθαι. ὁ δὲ ἀπληκτος ὢν ὑπὸ τῶν λίθων τὸ σῶμα πᾶν τοῦ παιδίου κατανάλωσε πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς, καὶ αὐτίκα ἀφανὴς ἐγένετο. (8) δυσφοροῦντων δ' αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τοῖς γενομένοις καὶ ἐν ἀπορίαι καθεστηκότων οὐ τῇ τυχούσῃ βουλομένων τε ἀποστεῖλαι εἰς Δελφούς, φθέγγεται ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ παιδίου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους κειμένη καὶ λέγει χρησμῶι τὰ ἀποβησόμενα·

ὦ πολυῦμνητον ναίων χθόνα λαὸς ἀπείρων,
μὴ στεῖχ' ἐς Φοῖβου τέμενος ναόν τε θυώδη·
οὐ γάρ σοι καθαραὶ χεῖρες αἵματος αἰθέρ' ἔχουσιν,
ἀλλὰ μῦσος προπάροιθε ποδῶν ἔντοσθε κελεύθου.
φράζεο δ' ἐξ ἐμέθεν, τρίποδος δ' ἀπόειπε κέλευθον·
μαντοσύνης πᾶσαν γὰρ ἐφετμήν σοι καταλέξω.
ἤματι γὰρ τούτῳ περιτελλομένου ἐνιαυτοῦ
ὦρισται πᾶσιν θάνατος, ψυχὰι δὲ βέονται
Λοκρῶν Αἰτωλῶν τ' ἀναμιξ βουλῇσιν Ἀθήνης.
οὐδ' ἀναπαύλησις κακοῦ ἔσσεται οὐδ' ἡβαιόν·
ἦδη γὰρ ψακάδες φόνιαι κατὰ κράτα κέχυνται,
νῦξ δ' ἐπὶ πάντα κέκευθε, μέλας δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἶθρη.
αὐτίκα νῦξ δ' ἔρεβος πᾶσαν κατὰ γαῖαν ὄρωρεν,
χῆροι δ' οἴκοι πάντες ἐπ' οὔδει γυῖα κλινούσιν,
οὐδὲ γυνὴ πένθος ποτὲ λείψεται οὐδέ νυ παῖδες
ἐν μεγάροις γοόωσι φίλους πατέρας περιφύντες·
τοῖον γὰρ τότε κύμα κατέδραμε πᾶσι κατ' ἄκρης.
αἱ αἰ πατρίδ' ἐμὴν αἰεὶ στένω αἰνὰ παθοῦσαν
μητέρα τ' αἰνοτάτην, ἣν ὕστερον ἔκλυσεν αἰών.
νώνυμνόν τε θεοὶ γένεσιν θήσουσιν ἅπαντες
Λοκρῶν τ' Αἰτωλῶν θ' ὅ τι που καὶ σπέρμα λίποιτο,
οὐνεκ' ἐμὴν κεφαλὴν λίποι αἰών, οὐδέ νυ πάντα
σώματος ἡφάνικεν μέλε' ἄκριτα, λείπε δὲ γαῖαν.

ἀλλ' ἄγ' ἐμὴν κεφαλὴν θέμεν ἥοι φαινομένηφι
 μηδέ θ' ὑπὸ ζοφερὴν γαῖαν κατακρυπτόμεν ἔνδον·
 αὐτοὺς δὲ προλιπόντας ἐὼν χώρον μετόπισθεν
 στείχειν εἰς ἄλλον χώρον καὶ λαὸν Ἀθήνης,
 εἴ τίνα που θανάτοιο λύσιν κατὰ μοῖραν ἔλησθε.

- (9) ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ Αἰτωλοὶ τοῦ χρησμοῦ γυναικῆς μὲν καὶ τὰ νήπια τέκνα τοὺς τε ὑπέργηρος ὑπεξέθεντο οὐ ἕκαστος ἐδύνατο, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἔμμενον караδοκοῦντες τὸ ἀποβησόμενον. καὶ συνέβη τῷ ἐξῆς εἶτι Αἰτωλοῖς καὶ Ἀκαρνασί συστήναι πόλεμον καὶ φθορὰν πολλὴν ἐκατέρων γενέσθαι.
- 13 Much work towards understanding of the historical background of this story was done by Luc Brisson, who was originally interested in the double-sex character of Polycritus' baby; see Brisson (1978: 80–122).
- 14 Proclus, *In Platonis rem publicam commentarii*, II.115: ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ <Ναυμάχιος ὁ Ἑπειρώτης> ἀνὴρ ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων πάππων γεγινώς, Πολύκριτον Αἰτωλὸν ἐπιφανέστατον Αἰτωλῶν καὶ Αἰτωλαρχίας τυχόντα καὶ ἀποθανεῖν καὶ ἀναβιῶναι μηνὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἐνάτῳ, καὶ ἀφικέσθαι εἰς ἐκκλησίαν κοινὴν τῶν Αἰτωλῶν καὶ συμβουλευσαὶ τὰ ἄριστα περὶ ὧν ἐβουλεύοντο· καὶ τούτων εἶναι μάρτυρας <Ἰέρωνα τὸν Ἐφέσιον> καὶ ἄλλους ἱστορικοὺς Ἀντιγόνῳ τε τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ ἄλλοις ἑαυτῶν φίλοις ἀποῦσι τὰ συμβάντα γράψαντας.
- 15 This Naumachius seems to be active in the mid-fourth century AD and is usually identified with a gnomic poet, partly preserved by Stobaeus; see Keydell (1935). However, information included in Proclus' narrative makes a direct borrowing from poetry hardly credible. Rather, all these details seem to come from the prose,
- 16 Erwin Rohde thought that the story comes from a collection of fictitious letters that contained 'eyewitness' reports' of multiple miracula, including the most famous of such novels, i.e. the bride of Corinth. Felix Jacoby in his Pauly-Wissowa entry on Hieron seems to be tempted by this interpretation, but does not exclude the existence of Hieron of Ephesus the *thaumasiographos*; see Rohde (1872); Jacoby (1912).
- 17 Scholten (2000: 89).
- 18 Crawford (2000: 148).
- 19 Rzepka (2005).
- 20 There are convincing reasons to assume that the historical background of the story might be the early years of the Successors, after major Aetolian conquests in western Locris and a temporary but severe setback that the Aetolians suffered in war against the Acarnanians in the year, 314–13 BC. As a *vaticinium ex eventu*, this letter may have been written between 312 and 301. See Brisson (1978: 88–101).
- 21 Hornblower (1981: 234–5); Seibert (1983: 2–7).
- 22 Hornblower (1981: 122–31).
- 23 Freitag (2000: 349n. 1829) rightly recognized the propagandist character of the story.

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Part 3

Transformations

Ethnography and the Gods in Tacitus' *Germania*

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There was no ethnography of religion in antiquity.¹ The reasons are straightforward: ethnography was not a discipline, and there was no ancient concept of religion. What we usually mean by ancient ethnography is in fact ethnographic writing, the written traces of a much wider discourse about the 'unity and diversity of mankind'.² Traces of ethnographic writing can be recovered from histories and geographies, and also from drama, epic poetry, elegy and the novel, philosophical dialogues, satire, medical treatises and more besides. Sciences did exist in antiquity. Mathematics, physics and astronomy were all defined spheres of study, each with their canonical literatures, and it was even possible to write of *physikoi*, *mathematikoi* and *astrologoi* and so on, even if few were paid for their labours. But ethnography-as-a-science is a modern invention.³ As for what we include in the term 'religion', ancients were perfectly able to write about cosmologies and rituals, as well as about the temples and images of the gods; but they did not reify 'religions' as we do, treating it as a separate sphere of life or field of enquiry. My aim in this chapter is to ask how these religious matters entered into ancient ethnographic discourse, taking as an example a text that has sometimes been presented as the most accomplished piece of Roman ethnography, and in the phrase '*interpretatio romana*' has provided the material for a highly influential paradigm of religious contact and cultural translation.

Ethnographic writing and the divine in classical antiquity

Religious matters often feature in ethnographic writing, but they were not an essential component of descriptions of the 'Other'. The *Researches* of Herodotus, like the *Germania*, pay special attention to foreign gods and rituals; by contrast, the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* and the relevant books (3–5) of the Elder Pliny's *Natural History* hardly mention them. Perhaps these differences reflect the personal interests of the authors in question. But other factors may well have played a part. Many texts seek to relate the habits and appearances of different peoples to the

physical environments they inhabited. Perhaps it was more difficult to integrate the religious lives of different peoples into those schematic interpretative frames than it was to incorporate their diet and disease, sexuality and temperament and *ēthē* in general. We might expect that rituals and the gods would be more prominent in those ethnographies that related the descent of particular peoples from Greek or Trojan heroes. In fact this is rarely the case, except when omens and oracles are described as guiding the founding fathers or confirming their title to new lands. Perhaps this is another example of us overemphasizing the 'othering' dimension of ethnographic discourse.⁴ One effect of the genealogical approach to ancient ethnographic enquiry was to flatten the moral and cultural differences between Greek and Roman authors and readers and their new found kin. Indeed some of our most important sources on Roman ritual are those Greek works, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities*, that seek to make connections between Greeks and Romans, rather than to signal difference.

Whatever the reasons, the gods and their rituals had no fixed place in ancient ethnographic writing. This made religious matters both an optional component of descriptions, and also an element that might be freely varied for other reasons, without disturbing the grand schematic lines of vision.⁵ That situation contrasts markedly with the place allocated religious matters in the ethnographic writing that emerged from the encounters between Europeans and other peoples in the early modern period. For a start, early modern Europeans travelled with a mental map of the cosmos that already ordered peoples according to their religions. The most common taxonomy was Christians, Moslems, Jews and Heathens.⁶ These four were naturally not regarded as of equivalent value. Savages might be equated with pre-Lapsarian man or as monstrous semi-beasts, akin to the most extreme classical representations of the barbarian.⁷ But whether regarded as innocents or bestial semi-humans, their religious characterization was clear. During the sixteenth century, the concept of religions emerged and began to be applied to the rituals and deities of various peoples, especially those of the New World.⁸ Some of these religions were idealized by Enlightenment *philosophes* and compared favourably with the practices of the Church.⁹ Religion assumed a new importance in the ethnographic writing of the late nineteenth century when the creation of comparative religious studies led to a more systematic interest in the diversity of rituals and belief systems. As anthropologists have become more interested in semantics and symbolism, so the study of religious practice and cosmology have come to be regarded as particularly likely to reveal the 'key' to the concealed logic of alien societies and cultures. Ritual and cosmology are now central to anthropologies of all kinds. This is one measure of the distance between our ethnography and ancient approaches.

Yet, even if religious matters were not central to ancient ethnographic discourse, they were still employed on occasion to explore issues of difference and similarity. One reason is that almost all ancient religious systems were polytheistic: it was perhaps an obvious exercise to hold up two lists of gods and seek the equivalent terms. That procedure must have taken place on countless occasions from the archaic period until late antiquity. Most assertions of equivalence or identity must have served the very local and temporary needs of travellers and settlers, traders and

soldiers, colonizers and colonized. What god was worshipped in this foreign land or alien temple? Philosophers had other questions. How might domestic theology be extended to incorporate these others or to operate in a strange land? Discussions like those contained in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* or in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* and *On the Decline of Oracles* stood in a tradition that stretched back to the Ionian Presocratics. But sophisticated attempts to bring rational order to the diversity of observed cults were probably of fairly esoteric interest, even among ancient elites. More common, and more important, were the issues potentially raised by the contingent and temporary identifications of deities. What, in particular, should we understand by statements about the equivalence of two deities?¹⁰ Consider Heracles and Melqart. Should we understand them as alternative and equally valid or contingent names for the same entity? Or that Greeks correctly, and Phoenicians less correctly, applied these different names to him? Or simply that the nearest value to 'Heracles' in the Phoenician system was 'Melqart' and vice versa? And was that pair fortuitously found? And if so, on one occasion or on many? Or was it cultivated and engineered, by priests and scholars, on the colonial middle grounds of the western Mediterranean? Later it is certainly possible to see or infer the syncretic engineering of new deities like Serapis, Mithras and Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus. But behind the equation Heracles–Melqart lies a long and complex history of exchanges and approximations, each with its own significance and each serving different interests.¹¹

Modern writing about translation or *interpretatio* often confuses several kinds of identification. The limits of translatability were keenly understood in antiquity, as the *Germania* makes clear: even in late antiquity, Hermes, Mercury and Thoth were not quite synonyms.¹² The bold claim made by Isis in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* to be the truest avatar of the Great Mother of Pessinus, Ceropian Minerva, Venus of Paphos, Dictyan Diana, Prosperine, Ceres of Eleusis, Juno, Bellona, Hecate and Rhamnusia is at once a claim to transcend conventional divine categories and an acknowledgement of the power still evoked by each one of these separate names.¹³ Ethnographic writing was only one locus of religious translation. It was certainly not the most significant. Much more influential were the establishment of cults such as that of Mater Magna Deorum, in which form Cybele was worshipped in the Roman West, and the efforts made in many Western communities to find Roman names for indigenous gods. The composition and reading of texts about religion was arguably the smallest part of ancient religious experience. Yet inevitably such texts – and especially Tacitus' *Germania* – have often been used to provide a key to the entire subject.¹⁴ My argument in this chapter is that what Tacitus chose to do with religion in the *Germania* makes views of that kind untenable. It does, however, provide a rich case study of the uses of religion in the description of alien peoples, and their insertion into narratives of various kinds.

The *Germania*

It would be impossible to attempt anything but the shortest summary of the critical reception of the *Germania* of Tacitus.¹⁵ Nor is it my aim to add another such treatment to the series of authoritative commentaries that stretch from that of Norden to those of Lund and Rives.¹⁶ But I do need to establish some parameters for my own reading of the text, and to make explicit my starting assumptions. It is (now) a truism that ethnographic discourse consists of a set of transactions between authors and readers, transactions from which those peoples described are largely excluded.¹⁷ The meanings given for both their outlandish and their familiar habits are generated not by themselves but by cultural play between those who write and those who read about them. Ostensibly subjects of the text under consideration, the Germans can therefore be seen as marginalized from a set of conversations entirely internal to Roman society. The *Germania* had its currency among Romans, not among Germans.¹⁸ By this I do not mean that Germany was merely a province of the Roman imaginary, nor that Tacitus' account was a fiction, or a simple mirror of Rome.¹⁹ I take it for granted that the text contains not only much truth, but also facts established by careful and diligent research. Some pieces of information can only really be satisfactorily explained as deriving from the testimony of native informants. Most of these informants were in all likelihood bilingual inhabitants of the frontier zone, among them soldiers, traders and local chiefs serving in the Roman *auxilia*. Like all cultural mediators, they would rapidly have come to know the sort of answers that were expected for particular lines of questioning. But although they might have deceived, in practice many will have come to depend on their credibility as local experts.²⁰ Their testimony was, presumably, largely reliable. So too was that of Tacitus. Whatever rhetorical aims he may have had – and I take for granted that the *Germania* was politically topical and morally engaged, without entering into the debate on the precise details of that topicality and engagement – his purposes will have depended on maintaining the verisimilitude of his representation. Germany was, after all, well known to many Romans, from military service in the Rhineland where between a third and a quarter of all military posts were held. Some encounters between Romans and Germans even took place in Rome and Italy: Augustus and the Julio-Claudian emperors kept a German bodyguard; German envoys occasionally visited the city and wondered at its marvels; and a handful of German chiefs lived in exile in Italy, hoping for the moment when it might suit the Caesars to restore them to power.²¹

Germany was familiar to even more Romans from their reading. Caesar's account at least was well known. Germans also featured in many other texts, notably the (lost) *German Wars* of the Elder Pliny and the same author's *Historia Naturalis*.²² The resemblances between pre-Tacitean textualizations of Germany and his own Germans strongly suggest that they had already acquired a fixed value. Germans partook of many qualities ascribed to all northern barbarians; that is, they were large, ferocious savages who were in some ways the defining opposite of the civilizations of the Mediterranean world, 'eaters of flesh, drinkers of milk'.²³ Like Herodotus' Scythians, the great prototype for such representations, they were unstable, labile, and unpredictable.²⁴ With no cities or fields to tie them down, no institutions or laws to bind

and define them, they were held to resemble the marshy wildernesses they inhabited in their fluidity, and in their lack of determinedness. Unlike some inhabitants of the edges of the world, however, they were wholly human.²⁵ Indeed, the last lines of the *Germania* fix the limit of Tacitus' account precisely on the border of the mythical, where the Hellusii and Oxionae are the first of the animal-human hybrids that were (equally familiar) inhabitants of the edges of the earth (46.4).²⁶

Tacitus does Germans beautifully, both here and again in the *Histories* and in the opening books of the *Annales*. The decision to write about a people familiar to his reader must have been a deliberate one. Tacitus might, after all, have written of a wholly imaginary place like Atlantis or the land of the Antipodes, or of somewhere less well known by his peers, such as Taprobane or Ultima Thule. Germany offered a familiar kind of 'otherness' and also an ethnographic complexity that might be more richly exploited than more stereotyped realms of the imagination. The Germans were a fixed value, even if that value was a certain lack of fixity. I have deliberately emphasized terms such as 'value' and 'currency' to make clear that I am not concerned with establishing 'what the (all?, some?) Romans thought' nor with '*Das Germanenbild der Römer*'. That said, the values assigned to terms such as 'Germans' were conventional. They also tended to be interdependent with the values assigned to other peoples. 'Germans' were one sign in a system that also included 'Gauls', 'Britons', 'Indians' and 'Ethiopians' as well as the special operator 'Romans', special in that it was often an implicit point of comparison, a notionally normative centre, or a term concealed in the first person plural. That symbol system was not a fixed map of the world, but more like a set of counters that could be deployed in cultural play. We are very familiar with some of the most common moves in this game, such as 'Germans exemplify virtues (or vices) absent in Rome', which might be elaborated as 'We used to be like Germans before we learned to be civilized' or 'We used to be virtuous when we were like Germans' and was an implicit reversal of 'Our superior civilization makes us more virtuous than the Germans.' The reality of Germany meant the game could be played in a more serious mode than if it simply concerned one or another Utopia. 'The Germans are barbarians and we will civilize them' or 'We used to civilize barbarians before we had emperors' or even 'We have not been ourselves (Romans) since we had emperors' and so on. By terming this 'play', I do not mean to imply that the stakes were low, or that the issues did not matter to the players. It derived from the rhetorical culture in which all male members of the Roman elite were brought up: Tacitus and his presumed readers were adepts at such games. That feature presumably forms one part of the popularity of ethnographic writing in antiquity, along with the fascination with others and difference generated by the travel and foreign service they undertook, and by encounters in the cosmopolitan world of the Roman Empire.²⁷ My question is how the gods of the Germans, and the rituals through which they worshipped them, were involved in this play.

The Germans in general: *Germania* 1–27

The plan of the *Germania* is well known. The text follows a familiar ekphrastic pattern according to which a global description of the whole is provided, and then followed by a more detailed narration of its constituent parts.²⁸ The opening is very Caesarian in that it establishes the Germans in a space marked out by natural boundaries – the Rhine and the Danube, mountain ranges and the Ocean – and as a people distinct from Gauls and Raetians, Dacians and Sarmatians. Successive chapters bolster their integrity as a people ‘like only to themselves’ (4.1),²⁹ and offer a generalizing account of German customs. The division between this first part of the text and the tribe-by-tribe survey that occupies the second part is clearly signalled (27.1).³⁰ From this point the text is organized as a *periegesis*, beginning at the Roman frontier and proceeding further and further to the north and east. Tacitus leads the reader deep into Germany, moving from the known to the unknowable, until together they reach the point where truth and fiction can no longer be distinguished. Here Tacitus abandons the reader *in medio*. The anti-closural move is an abrupt one.

Religious matters occur throughout the *Germania*. My account will more or less follow the sequence of their exposition. Right at the start (2), the reader is told how Germans sing in their songs of Tuisto, a god born from the earth and the father of Mannus who was the founder of their races, the ultimate *Stammvater* whose sons gave their names to the major divisions of the German people. The testimony of these songs is immediately impugned: several versions exist, each with different list of sons; and besides, there are also legends about Hercules and Ulysses. Tacitus affects to defer judgement. But he immediately follows this up with his own opinion, that the Germans have no connection via kinship or migration with any other people. They are thus firmly placed outside that network of kinship and genealogy and migration which in many ethnographic texts serves to connect different peoples.³¹

The *Germania* is not an innocent ethnography, if such things exist. Already we can observe Tacitus engaging in a game of the kind I outlined above. His procedure here is to offer up native views, affect ignorance ... and then suddenly produce his own conclusion. Readers have been offered a series of tempting alternatives of a conventional kind. That technique, of offering a series of possible answers to an antiquarian enquiry and then withholding judgement, is familiar enough.³² But in this case, Tacitus is only playing at withholding judgement. If the reader has been persuaded by any of these genealogies to believe that the natives know best, he has been caught out. Both the ancient lays of the Germans and the myths of Hercules and Ulysses are unreliable. Tacitus’ knowledge of the German present marks those pasts as fictional. This is how the game is to be played. Tacitus pursues his advantage. The Germans are like nothing you have ever seen; their land is uniquely wild and inhospitable. They are nothing like us, and care nothing for the precious metals that obsess us. Now the connections made between topics are deceptively casual. The discussion of metals leads into weapons and the ferocity of the Germans. Discussion of their wars leads to their warlike women, who are revealed to be the powerhouse behind the warriors, praising them, binding their wounds, bringing them sustenance and encouragement. German women have given armies

the courage to resist defeat, and the most valued hostages are German noblewomen. And so to female prophets:

They even believe that there resides in women some holy and prophetic force, and they always take heed of their advice and never neglect what they answer. We have seen how, in the time of the Deified Vespasian, Veleda was for a long time treated by many of them as a figure of great power. They also once venerated Albruna and many others, but not out of flattery and not declaring them goddesses (8.2).³³

At the mention of Veleda, first person testimony intrudes and the generic present tenses are interrupted by perfect tenses. As will happen more frequently in the second half of the *Germania*,³⁴ history threatens to rupture the ethnographic present. Here this draws attention to Tacitus' juxtaposition of how the Germans revere their priestesses, without *adulatio* or making them gods, and the way Romans treat their emperors and empresses. The game of othering the Germans suddenly seems more complicated. The Germans are still contrasted to a Roman norm, but the moral polarity has switched from characterizing them as fierce but inconstant warriors and a society where women dominate their menfolk, to presenting them favourably in relation to contemporary Roman practice. Not only are Romans convicted of *adulatio*, but the historical novelty of emperor worship is contrasted with the Germans' traditional honouring of their prophetesses. Even the date-check 'sub divo Vespasiano' provides a gratuitous allusion to the imperial cult.

Tacitus' characterization of the gods and rituals of the Germans follows in Chapters 9 and 10. It is a complex account, full of Caesarian echoes, but much is new:

Of all the gods they worship Mercury above all, to whom they even think it right on certain days to offer human sacrifices. Hercules and Mars they appease with conventional victims. A part of the Suebi also sacrifices to Isis. I have not been able to verify the cause and origin of this foreign ritual, but the fact that the image itself, made in the form of a boat, shows this cult has been imported. Otherwise they consider from the greatness of the gods that they should not be confined within buildings nor portrayed as if they resembled human beings in appearance. They dedicate woods and groves, and they give the names of the gods to that secret thing which they behold only with reverence (9).³⁵

This is a tantalizing passage, not just because we would like to know more, but because Tacitus constantly brings German and Roman religion into a relation of proximity only to suddenly signal their difference. Signs of similarity include the names of the gods – Mercury, Hercules, Mars and Isis – and also the religious language deployed – *hostiis litare fas ... religionem ... reverentia*. That sacrifices are organized *certis diebus* and that different gods received different victims sounds very Roman.³⁶ Yet human victims being *fas* is a blatant sign of difference, as is the Germans' disdain for images. As for Isis worship among the Suebi, Tacitus treats it with incredulity and bewilderment. Yet if Mercury and Hercules do not arouse comment, why should Isis?

The next chapter is devoted to divination. Tacitus claims that the Germans are passionate about taking the auspices, and goes on to describe a method for casting lots by seeing how a bundle of freshly cut twigs fall, and the role played by civic

priests and heads of household in interpreting the patterns made. The Germans (like the Romans) divine from the cries and flight of birds. But unlike any other people, they also practice divination from the movements and noises made by sacred white horses. The final form of divination described (Chapter 10) is that given by single combats between a captive enemy and one of their own warriors, a bloody ritual ending in death which returns the reader to the ancient stereotypes of the barbarian.³⁷ Once again there is a confusing interplay of sameness and difference. Recognizable to a Roman reader are the *auspicia* themselves and the importance placed on them; the parallel between the public actions of the *sacerdos civitatis* and the private action of the *paterfamilias*; the limits of the repeatability of divination; and the consultation of birds. But this is countered by the repetition of the *nemora* and *luci* with which Chapter 9 ended; by horse-divination; and by the *hinnitusque ac fremitus* which accompanies the ultimate savage augury.

Throughout these alternating familiarizations and alienations of the Germans, Tacitus seems to toy with the reader. What kind of relation are we to imagine between Roman and German on the basis of their gods and their rituals? Are they surprisingly like us, or horribly different? No very obvious conclusion is suggested. The *Germania* could have been a work that claimed that fundamental similarities lay behind the apparent differences, or indeed one that demonstrated that the apparent resemblances between some gods and some rituals marked fundamental contrasts. But instead Tacitus keeps the reader guessing as to which emphasis will eventually dominate. Should we imagine a deliberate design to force the reader to decide, and by settling on an appraisal of the Germans come to some judgement on Roman society? Or is this a more playful exercise, delighting the reader with rapid shifts in tone and position, the counterpart of a piece of virtuoso display oratory? Like Tacitus, I choose for the moment to defer judgement.

It is only fair to point out that none of these moves are confined to Tacitus' discussions of religious matters. Similar moves can be observed when other German institutions are surveyed in the first part of the *Germania*, including political life, the family, sexual *mores* and kinship. Rituals perhaps offered special opportunities for exoticism, such as the white horses wandering where they will be unguided by human hand, and the slaughter of human victims. Yet the possibility of translation is constantly suggested by the use of familiar names for most of the gods mentioned in this first section, and by the use of Latin ritual terminology to denote priests (*sacerdotes*) and divination (*auspicia*).

The Germans, tribe by tribe: *Germania* 27–46

The second half of the *Germania* not only signals a move from a generalizing to a differentiating ethnographic gaze, but also marks a temporary limit to the monograph's insistent achronicity.

So much we have learned about the origins and customs of all the Germans: now I will set out the institutions and rituals of individual peoples, how they differ from

each other in this respect, and also which tribes have migrated out of Germany into Gaul (27.2).³⁸

The monograph opened with Tacitus rejecting legends of migration and proceeded to represent the timeless nature of the Germans. Now history is reintroduced into the mix alongside diversity. For the reader, the frequent references to events in Romano-German relations, along with the periegetical organization, generates a sense of narrative. As if to emphasize this shift of expository gear, we are treated to the first (and only) citation in the *Germania*, and it is a significant one:

The deified Caesar, the greatest of authorities, tells us that once upon a time the Gauls were far stronger than today, and for this reason it is believable that the Gauls even crossed over into Germany (28).³⁹

The allusion is to a passage that occurs in the middle of Caesar's 'ethnographic digression' on the Germans in book six of the *Gallic War*.⁴⁰ The compressed account of migrations presented in Chapter 28 mentions several tribes that had been major players in Caesar's commentaries, beginning appropriately with the Helvetii. Tacitus returns, too, in passing, to the unreliability of native traditions, in this case the German ancestry asserted by the Treveri and Nervi. The chapter culminates with the Roman resettlement of the Ubii and their transformation into colonists and Agrippinenses.

For a while, Rome and the Romans will be much more present in the text. Indeed the geographical ordering principle fragments a continuous narrative of Rome's German wars. The effect resembles the scattered historical notices contained in Strabo's *Geography* and in the periegetic sections of Mela, Pliny or Solinus. Ethnographic 'digressions' when they occur in historical writing are, like other kinds of *ekphrasis*, often regarded as a form of narrative retardation. But in the *Germania* the relationship is reversed: achronicity and the ethnographic present have been established as the norm, and history and narrative are the intruders. So Chapter 29 launches into an account of the Batavi which recounts how they have once been part of the Chatti, the civil war that had led to their migration, the special status they had found in the Roman Empire as a mark of the persistence of their ancient prestige and then the similar situation of the Mattiaci 'beyond the former limits of the empire' (29).⁴¹ A further variation on the theme is offered by the recent Roman settlement of the Agri Decumates. But the account of the Chatti and of their neighbours interrupts the flow. History again muscles in with the story of 60,000 Bructeri annihilated by other Germans, but then the ethnographic focus moves north to the Frisii, and so on. This section comes to a climax when a single chapter (37) summarizes wars between Romans and Germans to which Pliny the Elder had devoted no fewer than 20 books. From the Cimbric invasion to Trajan's second consulship, Tacitus calculates a period of 220 years. 'So long the conquest of Germany is taking.' It is clear that the narrative, which in the *Germania* is frustrated by geography and ethnography, is the story of Roman conquest.

This historicized ethnography is a very different narrative terrain for religious commentary. In fact, nothing is said of the indigenous cults or gods of the peoples who are described in Chapters 29–37, the fierce Chatti and the Tencteri and Usipi,

the Chamavii and Angrivari, the Dulgubini and the Chasuarii or the Frisii, nor of the Cherusci and the Cimbri. There is no obvious reason why religious matters should have been suppressed. Other ethnographic peculiarities are noted, such as the habit of Chattan warriors of not cutting their hair before each kills his first enemy (Chapter 31.1), and the horsemanship of the Tencterii (Chapter 32). Nor is it any answer to say religious affairs have been dealt with in the generalizing section of the *Germania*, for they recur in the ethnography of Suebic tribes with which the monograph concludes. Finally, there were certainly things Tacitus *might* have mentioned, such as the Cheruscan sacrifice of Roman prisoners captured in the Varian disaster of AD 9, events he would allude to graphically in the *Annales*.⁴² Equally, the brief appearance of the Cimbri might have provided an occasion for discussion of the sacred gold of the lakes of Tolosa, connected by other writers with the plundering of Delphi by the Gauls.⁴³ But these opportunities are not taken. Tacitus has deliberately chosen *not* to foreground Germanic rituals and German gods in his accounts of those peoples who bordered the Roman Empire.

There is, however, an undercurrent of religious language in these chapters. But it is used to different effect, evoking the religious ideologies of Roman imperialism. One of the possible explanations offered in Chapter 33 for the slaughter of the Bructeri by other German tribes is 'the favour showed to us by the gods'. The chapter closes with the pious wish that discord among Rome's enemies may continue 'for as long as our imperial destiny urges us forward' (33.2).⁴⁴ Perhaps surprisingly, given his earlier comments on *adulatio* and the imperial cult, the account of Roman naval explorations of the Ocean in Chapter 34, ends with a parallel between the expeditions of Drusus Germanicus and of Hercules.

Drusus Germanicus did not lack courage, but Ocean blocked his enquiries just as it did those of Hercules. No-one has made the attempt since then. About the deeds of the gods it seems more devout and reverential to believe than to know for sure (34.2).⁴⁵

The final part of the *Germania* (Chapter 38ff.) takes us beyond the lands of Rome's regular enemies into a vaster, stranger world, one in which the gods and their rites will once again become prominent in the descriptions of German tribes. This was the world of the Suebi, a super-tribe the many subsidiary peoples of which will occupy almost the entire remainder of the monograph until its very last chapter (38).⁴⁶ It was a region almost unknown to Rome, and almost untouched by Roman arms, and most of it was some way beyond the frontier. What Tacitus knew of this region must have been reconstructed almost entirely from hearsay, whether gathered himself or via the medium of earlier ethnographic writing now lost. But there were many possible sources: among them were soldiers who had taken part in occasional expeditions in the continental interior; envoys sent to German tribes;⁴⁷ Latin speaking Germans within the empire; and figures like the Roman knight sent north from Carnuntum in Nero's reign to collect amber from the shores of the Baltic.⁴⁸ From this point on until the end of the *Germania*, tribes will be characterized not by their brief appearances in Roman history, but by their ethnographic peculiarities. Rituals and the gods – although absent from the descriptions of individual tribes in

Chapters 27–37 – will form an important part of these characterizations. First into sight are the Semnones:

The Semnones say that they are the oldest and most distinguished of the Suebi. Their faith in their antiquity is confirmed by ritual matters. For at a fixed time, all peoples of the same blood come together, through embassies to a forest hallowed by ancient auguries and an ancient dread, and when they have performed a public human sacrifice they celebrate the ghastly origins of their barbarous rites. And there are other signs of respect shown to this grove. No man may enter it unless bound in chains, as a lesser being acknowledging the power of the deity over him. If he accidentally falls over, he is not permitted to get up and rise, but must roll out across the ground. On this place all their *superstitio* is focused, as if the origin of their race is to be found on that spot, and there the god who rules all things, everything else being subordinate and obedient to him. The fortune of the Semnones adds authority to all this, for they inhabit a hundred districts and from this great mass of population believe themselves to be the chief people of the Suebi (39.1-2).⁴⁹

There are a few obvious similarities with the manner in which Tacitus characterized German religion in general in Chapters 9 and 10. The language deployed – *religione, auguriis, sacra, reverentia, numinis* – invites the reader to think of the cults of the Semnones in familiar terms. So, too, perhaps do the taboos surrounding the sacred grove. Certainly a modern reader familiar with Roman ritual might think of the elaborate *piacula* performed by the Arvales whenever works had been performed in their sacred grove.⁵⁰ Then there is the link asserted between the sacred place, the rituals that take place there, and their myths of origin. *Eoque ... inde ... ibi*. This is the first fixed geographical point mentioned in Germany, the first departure from the stereotype of fluid, moving peoples, who occupy spaces not places. How very Roman it is – so it would seem – to link myth to place via ritual! And then again there is the answering, contrapuntal defamiliarization. Human sacrifice is presented in all its barbaric horror: *caesoque publice homine celebrant barbari ritus horrenda primordia*. And their beliefs are ridiculed as *superstitio* and recounted as if (*tamquam*) they were true. Even so, the Semnones' belief that they are the oldest and most distinguished of the Suebi seems to be accepted by the surrounding peoples. These Germans seem to have a mirror image of Roman religion, one that sets them at the centre of the world and superior to all other peoples, with the difference that their myths are false and their cult is mere *superstitio*.⁵¹ The parallel opens up the possibility for a familiar play on the part of the reader: how do we know it is the Germans, rather than ourselves, who are wrong about this?⁵²

Chapter 40 rapidly introduces eight more Suebian tribes:

There is nothing remarkable about these individual peoples except that they share a cult of Nerthus, that is of Mother Earth, and believe she gets involved in the affairs of mankind and wanders about among the tribes. There is on an island in the Ocean a sacred grove. It is said that on it there is a wagon, covered with drapes, which only one priest is allowed to touch. He divines when the goddess is present

in her inner sanctum, and escorts her out with great reverence, drawn by heifers. Then there is a season of rejoicing and in any place where she chooses to come and be welcomed there are great festivals. No wars are begun and no one takes up weapons. All iron objects are shut away. Security and peace are only known in this period, and only then appreciated, until the priest returns the goddess, sated with the company of mortal men to her temple. Soon the wagon, the drapes and – if you believe it, the deity herself are washed in a secret lake. Slaves perform these rites, and are immediately drowned in the lake. For this reason there is a secret terror and a holy ignorance of those things which only those about to die may behold (40.3-4).⁵³

By contrast with the supreme god worshipped by the Semnones, the common deity of these peoples has a name, Nerthus, that is, Mother Earth. No reason for the identification is given. The peregrination of the goddess in her sacred wagon drawn by heifers, the sacred truce, the ban on iron, and the ritual bathing of Nerthus when she returned to her grove on the island in the midst of Ocean, and the drowning of the slaves, none of these particularly suggest Terra Mater. And we are now in the land of travellers' tales, as is indicated by the phrase *si velis credere*. How far are we invited to make our own minds up? Whether she is really bathed by slaves – not easy without a cult image – or whether there really was a goddess in the wagon? Is this another empty cult? This time – Tacitus tells the reader – you can decide for yourself.

The reader's own peregrinations among the Germans are now brought abruptly down to earth – or rather back from the Ocean to the Roman frontier – with accounts of the Suebian tribes that border Rhaetia and the other Danube provinces (Chapters 42–3). Now we are closer to home, each tribe is again characterized by its past and present relations with Rome, and the exotic ethnography is absent. But as soon as the narrative leads us back into the interior, we re-enter Darkest Europe. Beyond the mountains is the land of the Suebian Lugii, themselves divided into a mass of sub-tribes, one of which is the Nahanarvali:

Among the Nahanarvali a grove of ancient ritual is displayed. A priest clad in female clothing presides there, but the gods they speak of are, in Roman translation, Castor and Pollux. This is the force of the deity, but their name is the Alci. There are no images, no trace of foreign superstition, but they are brothers and are worshipped as young men (43.3).⁵⁴

This passage is the source of the famous and much discussed phrase *interpretatio romana*. When it comes to naming the gods, Tacitus' practice in the *Germania* seems at first inconsistent. Chapter 2 offers us the name of a god from whom all men are said to be descended. His name is Tuisto, and no Latin equivalent is offered. But chapter 9 offers us the information that Mercury, Hercules and Mars are worshipped. Nothing is said of their local names or characteristics, and the identification is not based on their appearance since they have no images.⁵⁵ The same chapter claims that some of the Suebi worship Isis too. (There is no indication in the account of the Suebi as to which tribe this is.) Then there is a god of the Semnones, the supreme god inhabiting the sacred grove, who is given neither a German nor a Latin name. Then there is

Nerthus, translated as Terra Mater. Finally we have the Alci, translated as Castor and Pollux. Like Isis, there is no sign that they have come from elsewhere, yet Tacitus asks this question only of them and of her.

Knowing about other peoples' gods was notoriously difficult. Classical identifications were often made on iconographic grounds, something the relatively stable attributes of Greek deities made relatively easy.⁵⁶ This strategy was clearly not possible; indeed the absence of an image perhaps made it possible to believe that no god was really there at all. Why else was the story of slaves bathing a goddess especially incredible? Nor were the rituals particularly helpful. Nerthus behaves in a very idiosyncratic mode for Terra Mater, and the transvestite priest of the Alci hardly connotes the Dioscuri. How did Tacitus discern the *vis numinis*? That the Alci were brothers provided one clue; that Isis was represented as a *liburna* was another, given her connection with the sailing season. Yet in both cases their recognizability arouses the suspicion that they are not German at all. Were other gods so alien that no equivalent was suggested? Was Tuisto, perhaps, or the god of the Semnones, more or less untranslatable?

Tacitus represents himself as a careful investigator of these phenomena, one who notes and signals the limits of what is knowable, and of the things he is prepared to believe. This is, of course, a trope of ethnographic discourse when it reaches the limits of the known world. The further we penetrate into Germany, the more the reader has to make up his or her own mind. The final religious notice in the *Germania* refers to the distant Aestii who share the rituals and customs of the Suebi but speak a language closer to that of Britain:

They worship the mother of the gods. As a sign of their belief they were images of boars. This sign is more powerful than weapons in ensuring the safety of any worshipper of the goddess, even among his enemies (45.2).⁵⁷

Once again we have the bold statement that they worship the Mother of the Gods. But her cult is unrecognizable: not only are their *ritus* said to be like those of the Sequani, but the totemic boar images that convey sacrosanctity among enemies have no parallel in Roman religion. Unlike Nerthus/Terra Mater, we do not learn her name. A very clear geography of cult seems to have appeared, one that located exotic cults, cruel rituals and uncertainty about their meaning at the furthest limits of Germany. But in fact the reverse is true. Tacitus has engineered strangeness by the specific selection of his religious notices and the way he has chosen to present them. The further Germans, the unconquered regions of Germany, are not the Other: they have *been* othered, and rituals have provided a powerful means of achieving this end.

The uses of ritual

Looking at the magnificent sun chariot displayed in the galleries of the National Museum in Copenhagen, alongside great strings of amber and the bodies of sacrificial victims pressed into bogs, or contemplating ritual deposits in lakes and on moors across northern Europe from Fiskerton in Lincolnshire to Gudme on Funen and Oberdorla in Thuringia, it is difficult not to recognize elements of some of the more

distinctive cults described in the *Germania*. Wagons, human sacrifices and ritual treatment of weapons were common elements in a cultic tradition that was shared by many peoples of Iron Age Europe.⁵⁸ Not everything that Tacitus relates about the rituals of the Germans can be exactly paralleled. But little, if any of it, is unbelievable against this background. This should not be a surprise. By the early second century AD, a great deal of information was available about northern Europe, both in books and in the experience and reportage of individuals, both Germans and Romans. There was certainly no need to fictionalize German ritual, whether by the conventional devices of *inventio* or by recycling tropes from other northern peoples.

All the same, it should be clear by now that the *Germania* is a poor guide to the religious ethnography of the Romans' northern neighbours. Selection and presentation have, in all parts of the work, subordinated discussions of religious matters to Tacitus' wider aims. Tacitus is artful and beguiling, but not especially original in the way in which he incorporated religious matters into his ethnographic writing. Religion was, I have argued, an optional element of ethnographic discourse and, unlike diet or ferocity, its content was already determined by prevalent paradigms of human geography. We can see Tacitus exploiting this freedom when it comes to religious matters. But we should not expect ethnography of religion, and we do not find one.

Notices of religion serve a number of specific purposes in the *Germania*. At first they differentiate Germans from Romans (as Caesar had used them to differentiate Germans from Gauls) and they add colour to the games of sameness and difference with which the first part of the *Germania* is concerned, inviting readers to measure themselves against alternative ideals, identities and historical destinies. On one occasion – the reference to Roman *adulatio* – German customs give Tacitus a chance to make a point about what he sees as an undesirable novelty in Roman cult. Yet mostly religious rites are mixed with other customs throughout, and treated in much the same way. As the *Germania* progresses, they help elaborate a geography of strangeness, in which distance from the frontier correlates with an increasing sense of the bizarre and the mysterious, implicitly constructing Rome as normal and well known. Close to the frontier, religious language alludes to the divine mandate for Roman world dominion, a commonplace of Tacitus' day; conversely, these Germans are given no cult of their own. Further away, among the Suebi, beyond the mountains, and on the shores and islands of the Ocean, religion is a powerful means of indicating the moral distance between Germany and Rome. Invisible deities are worshipped with strange and horrific rites in sacred groves. Exotic deities are female and/or invisible, and the male priests are bland compared with the respect paid to their prophetesses. The gods of the Germans are first encountered in Roman guise, but the possibility of translation falters and breaks down as we approach the edges of the world. Religion can signal the horrific and the alien, the cruel and the repulsive. All this is part of a standard dehumanization of 'barbarians'. Yet discussion of the ancient rituals of the Germans is also used to shift the pace of the exposition, into an ethnographic present underwritten by remote antiquity. Allusions to Rome's fates and fortune and the expedition of Drusus reminds us that since Virgil (and maybe long before⁵⁹), Roman imperialism has had a religious narrative too, even if in Germany it has stalled, at least for the moment.

Notes

- 1 Earlier versions of this chapter were presented to audiences at Erfurt and Leiden. Those present on those occasions will know how very much it has been improved by their comments, for all of which I am very grateful. I am also grateful to the editors for comments on an earlier draft. All references in the notes are to the *Germania* unless otherwise noted.
- 2 The phrase from a definition of modern anthropology offered by Leach (1982).
- 3 On this issue, see further Woolf (2011: 13–17).
- 4 On which, see now Gruen (2011) and Vlassopoulos in chapter two of this volume.
- 5 Those schemas and their deployment are the subject of Woolf (2011, ch. 2).
- 6 Masuzawa (2005).
- 7 Gruzinski and Rouveret (1976); Sheehan (1980); Bentley (1993); Pocock (2005: 157–80); Pagden (1982).
- 8 Smith (1998). For the relationship of this discourse with reflections on antiquity, see Stroumsa (2002).
- 9 Pagden (1993: 117–40).
- 10 This section owes a great deal to the sophisticated discussion of Ando (2008: 43–58).
- 11 Bonnet (1988); Jourdain-Annequin (1989); Malkin (2005).
- 12 Bowersock (1990).
- 13 Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 11.47. On which, see Versnel (1990). See also Lucian *On the Syrian Goddess* 31–32 on Atargatis/Hera and her relationship to other goddesses.
- 14 Wissowa (1916–19). On which, see the comments of Ando (2008: 44–6).
- 15 Mellor (1995); Krebs (2005); Rives (1999: 66–74).
- 16 Norden (1920); Lund (1990); Rives (1999).
- 17 Foundational texts for such an approach include Clifford and Marcus (1986); Comaroff and Comaroff (1992).
- 18 O'Gorman (1993).
- 19 A point clearly stated by Gruen (2011: 159–78).
- 20 Gudeman (1900); Woolf (2009).
- 21 For the German bodyguards, see Speidel (1984). Tacitus' *Annales* 13.54 tells the anecdote of a German embassy sight-seeing at the Theatre of Pompey. On German exiles resident in Italy, see Rives (1999: 29–30).
- 22 Discussion in Murphy (2004: ch. 5).
- 23 Krebs (2011); Shaw (1982).
- 24 Krebs (2006).
- 25 Contrast the grotesques and hybrids gathered from Pliny in Evans (1999). More generally Romm (1992: 67–81).
- 26 *cetera iam fabulosa: Hellusios et Oxionas ora hominum voltusque, corpora atque artus ferarum gerere: quod ego ut incompertum in medio relinquam.*
- 27 For the modern counterpart, see Clifford (1999); Thomas (1994).
- 28 For the pattern, Fowler (1991).
- 29 *ipse eorum opinionibus accedo, qui Germaniae populos nullis aliis aliarum nationum conubiis infectos propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem extitisse arbitrantur.*
- 30 *haec in commune de omnium Germanorum origine ac moribus accepimus: nunc singularum gentium instituta ritusque, quatenus differant, quae nationes e Germania in Gallias commigraverint, expediam.*

- 31 Bickermann (1952).
- 32 On Plutarch's questions, see Preston (2001). On Latin parallels, especially in relation to Ovid's *Fasti*, see Beard (1987). For the phenomenon in ancient historiography, see Marincola (1997: 280–86).
- 33 inesse quin etiam sanctum aliquid et providum putant, nec aut consilia earum aspernantur aut responsa neglegunt. vidimus sub divo Vespasiano Veledam diu apud plerosque numinis loco habitam; sed et olim Albrunam et compluris alias venerati sunt, non adulatione nec tamquam facerent deas.
- 34 See below on *Germania* 28–9, 33–4 and especially 37.
- 35 deorum maxime Mercurium colunt, cui certis diebus humanis quoque hostiis litare fas habent. Herculem et Martem concessis animalibus placant. pars Sueborum et Isidi sacrificat: unde causa et origo peregrino sacro, parum comperi, nisi quod signum ipsum in modum liburnae figuratum docet advectam religionem. ceterum nec cohibere parietibus deos neque in ullam humani oris speciem adsimulare ex magnitudine caelestium arbitrantur: lucos ac nemora consecrant deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.
- 36 On the grammar of sacrifices, see Scheid (1999).
- 37 auspicia sortesque ut qui maxime observant: sortium consuetudo simplex. virgam frugiferae arbori decisa in surculos amputant eosque notis quibusdam discretos super candidam vestem temere ac fortuito spargunt. mox, si publice consultetur, sacerdos civitatis, sin privatim, ipse pater familiae, precatus deos caelumque suspiciens ter singulos tollit, sublato secundum impressam ante notam interpretatur. si prohibuerunt, nulla de eadem re in eundem diem consultatio; sin permissum, auspiciorum adhuc fides exigitur. et illud quidem etiam hic notum, avium voces volatusque interrogare; proprium gentis equorum quoque praesagia ac monitus experiri. Publice aluntur isdem nemoribus ac lucis, candidi et nullo mortali opere contacti; quos pressos sacro curru sacerdos ac rex vel princeps civitatis comitantur hinnitusque ac fremitus observant. Nec ulli auspicio maior fides, non solum apud plebem, sed apud procures, apud sacerdotes; se enim ministros deorum, illos conscios putant. est et alia observatio auspiciorum, qua gravium bellorum eventus explorant. eius gentis, cum qua bellum est, captivum quoquo modo interceptum cum electo popularium suorum, patriis quemque armis, committunt: victoria huius vel illius pro praeiudicio accipitur.
- 38 haec in commune de omnium Germanorum origine ac moribus accepimus: nunc singularum gentium instituta ritusque, quatenus differant, quae nationes e Germania in Gallias commigraverint, expediam.
- 39 validiores olim Gallorum res fuisse summus auctorum divus Iulius tradit; eoque credibile est etiam Gallos in Germaniam transgressos.
- 40 Caesar *BG* 6.24.1: ac fuit antea tempus cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent, ulto bella inferrent, propter hominum multitudinem agrique inopiam trans Rhenum colonias mitterent.
- 41 manet honos et antiquae societatis insigne; nam nec tributis contemnuntur nec publicanus atterit; exempti oneribus et conlationibus et tantum in usum proeliorum sepositi, velut tela atque arma, bellis reservantur. On the history of the Batavi, see now Roymans (2004).
- 42 Tacitus *Annales* 1.61 recounting Germanicus' visit and the sight of 'lucis propinquis barbarae arae, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant'.
- 43 Dyson (1970); Woolf (2011: 74–8).
- 44 maneat, quaeso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui, quando

- urgentibus imperii fatis nihil iam praestare fortuna maius potest quam hostium discordiam.
- 45 nec defuit audentia Druso Germanico, sed obstitit Oceanus in se simul atque in Herculem inquiri. mox nemo temptavit, sanctiusque ac reverentius visum de actis deorum credere quam scire.
- 46 nunc de Suebis dicendum est, quorum non una, ut Chattorum Tencterorumve, gens; maiorem enim Germaniae partem obtinent, propriis adhuc nationibus nominibusque discreti, quamquam in commune Suebi vocentur.
- 47 Most accounts of diplomacy relate the reception of foreign embassies by the emperor, but some missions were occasionally sent. One to the Cotini is attested during the Marcomannic Wars by Dio 71.12.3, on which see Millar (1982: 5–6).
- 48 Pliny *NH* 37.45: Sexcentis millibus passuum fere a Carnunto Pannoniae abesse litus id Germaniae, ex quo invehitur, percognitum nuper, vivitque eques R. ad id comparandum missus ab Iuliano curante gladiatorium munus Neronis principis. qui et commercia ea et litora peragravit, tanta copia inventa, ut retia coercentis feris podium protegentia sucinis nodarentur, harena vero et libitina totusque unius diei apparatus in variatione pompae singulorum dierum esset e sucino. On this and similar expeditions, see Nicolet (1991: 85–94).
- 49 vetustissimos se nobilissimosque Sueborum Semnones memorant; fides antiquitatis religione firmatur. stato tempore in silvam auguriis patrum et prisca formidine sacram omnes eiusdem sanguinis populi legationibus coeunt caesoque publice homine celebrant barbari ritus horrenda primordia. est et alia luco reverentia: nemo nisi vinculo ligatus ingreditur, ut minor et potestatem numinis prae se ferens. si forte prolapsus est, attolli et insurgere haud licitum: per humum evolvuntur. eoque omnis superstitio respicit, tamquam inde initia gentis, ibi regnator omnium deus, cetera subiecta atque parentia. adicit auctoritatem fortuna Semnonum: centum pagi iis habitantur magnoque corpore efficitur ut se Sueborum caput credant.
- 50 Cf. Acta Arvalium for 19 May, AD 87 with Scheid (1998).
- 51 On which, see Gordon (2008); Beard, North and Price (1998: 215–22).
- 52 For the ideological value of the normalized view of the boundary between *religio* and *superstitio*, see Gordon (1990)
- 53 nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, inveni populis arbitrantur. est in insula Oceani castum nemus, dicatumque in eo vehiculum, veste contextum; attingere uni sacerdoti concessum. is adesse penetrati deam intellegit vectamque bubus feminis multa cum veneratione prosequitur. laeti tunc dies, festa loca, quaecumque adventu hospitioque dignatur. non bella ineunt, non arma sumunt; clausum omne ferrum; pax et quies tunc tantum nota, tunc tantum amata, donec idem sacerdos satiatam conversatione mortalium deam templo reddat. mox vehiculum et vestes et, si credere velis, numen ipsum secreto lacu abluitur. servi ministrant, quos statim idem lacus haurit. arcanus hinc terror sanctaque ignorantia, quid sit illud, quod tantum perituri vident.
- 54 apud Nahanarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. ea vis numini, nomen Alcis. nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur.
- 55 Contrast the Caesarian model at *BG* 6.17 where both images and attributes are both adduced: deum maxime Mercurium colunt. huius sunt plurima simulacra: hunc omnium inventorem artium ferunt, hunc viarum atque itinerum ducem, hunc ad

- quaestus pecuniae mercaturasque habere vim maximam arbitrantur. post hunc Apollinem et Martem et Iovem et Minervam. de his eandem fere, quam reliquae gentes, habent opinionem: Apollinem morbos depellere, Minervam operum atque artificiorum initia tradere, Iovem imperium caelestium tenere, Martem bella regere.
- 56 Gordon (1979).
- 57 matrem deum venerantur. insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis omniumque tutela securum deae cultorem etiam inter hostis praestat.
- 58 Parker Pearson (2006). For a more general account, see Todd (1992: 104–21).
- 59 On religious understandings of Roman imperialism, see Brunt (1978: 163–7); North (1993).

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‘But This Belongs to Another Discussion’: Exploring the Ethnographic Digression in Plutarch’s *Lives*

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Ethnography is noticeable in Plutarch’s *Lives*,¹ and can be found in specifically designated segments, namely, digressions.² It is well known that readers of the biographies are sometimes taken off the main track to an excursus, in which the narrator inserts material apparently deviating from the life story of the subject.³ This excursus can be a lengthy passage, or a short aside, occasionally incorporating an authorial statement and at times dealing with wide-ranging topics such as science, literature, art or nature.⁴ Anecdotes and sayings from the life of the hero notwithstanding,⁵ the narrator refers occasionally to tales from the lives of other characters presented in different biographies.⁶ In some of these digressions, the style seems to change as the narrator appears to be including passages written in different genres.⁷ Plutarch was of course aware of this rhetorical device and sometimes even uses the technical term *παρέκβασις* to signal the end of a digression.⁸ Elsewhere he uses an explicit statement as a marker (*Cor.* 11.6: ‘ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἑτέρῳ γένει γραφῆς προσήκει’; ‘but this belongs to another type of writing/another type of discussion’). Baffled by these passages, scholars are often of the opinion that they are irrelevant to the story. A typical response would be the following, by D. A. Russell (1966: 153) on *Lysander* 19: ‘What we have before us is best described as a misplaced footnote.’⁹ However, an attempt should be made to try and elucidate these digressions as noted by Pechter (1975: 81–2):

It is easy to list examples of Plutarch’s digressions, not easy to explain them, and yet an explanation is important, because digressions are an essential aspect of Plutarch’s narrative method, not an occasional accident ... Obviously, digressions are relative phenomena. A piece of writing seems to be digressive, to depart from an area, in proportion to one’s sense of the narrowness of this area. And for Plutarch, the defining limits of an area, in this case the area of human character, are flexible indeed; they are simply the man’s birth and death and all the events that happen to him in between.

Some scholars try to explain these digressions as instances where Plutarch takes the opportunity to display his extensive learning and erudition.¹⁰ Others argue that these digressions were intended to relax or alternatively amaze the reader, or make him (or her) think.¹¹ Implying that he was slavishly following his sources, others still suggest that these junctures indicate transitions in Plutarch's use of the information provided in his texts,¹² or else attempts to fill in gaps given the lack thereof.¹³ More recently, however, these asides have been seen to be of relevance to the biographical work in which they are found, to be significant to the main structure of the narrative and to shed light on the character of the main figure.¹⁴

Plutarch's ethnographic digressions present a unique case in point, as the passages describe habits, not of the hero but of another group of people, and often a tale that is unrelated to the protagonist's life story. As seemingly appended segments, they leave the reader perplexed as to their true narratological significance. The context, nevertheless, appears straightforward: it is usually the foreign nations or tribes Plutarch's statesmen are dealing with, even though occasionally characteristic features of Greek groups or Romans are brought in.¹⁵ The biographer's views on ethnographic/geographic digressions are stated at the beginning of the *Life of Theseus* (1.1-2). Plutarch draws a parallel between recounting the deeds of heroes in historical periods and writing on known places. Both practices share the same feature of being bounded by ignorance of remote times and locations, to such an extent that the attempts to address these far removed places and periods involve different material (the stuff that fables are made of), a different epistemological condition (οὐκέτι' ἔχει πίστιν οὐδὲ σαφήνειαν) and a different genre (ποιηταὶ καὶ μυθογράφοι). One would thus suspect that the inclusion of depictions of strange countries or peoples, like the lapse into unfamiliar times, involves a change of theme or the adoption of several alien generic traits. The analogy might serve to show that Plutarch is aware of a marked break in his account, once the text moves on to demarcate foreign ethnic groups, their abode and characteristics (as much as there should be a noted difference if the story goes to far-off times). In the next passage of the *Theseus*, Plutarch has the narrator attempt to transform myth into a semblance of history, by submitting fable to reason (ἐκκαθαίρομενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἱστορίας ὄψιν), that is, by making fable structurally adopt features of the form of history and its internal logic.¹⁶ In this chapter, we shall try to see the extent to which Plutarch succeeds in his concurrent effort to incorporate the discussion of other groups, that is, ethnography (whether or not as part of geography), within biography, and the interaction between these two genres. We shall try to study how Plutarch matches this ethnographic depiction to the overall moral aim of his writings. The goal here will be to see how Plutarch explores *ethos* through *ethnos*,¹⁷ using three examples, taken from the *Lives* of Camillus (15-16), Theseus (5) and Pompey (35).

Camillus 15–16

Our first hero, Camillus, was celebrated for expelling the Gauls from Rome and for the honour of being called the Second Founder of the city (cf. Livy, 5.49.7).¹⁸ Just before turning to relate the story of the capture of Rome by the Gauls (who appear for the first time in *Cam.* 14.3), Plutarch pauses to tell the readers about this tribe of people in the first section of chapter 15 (*Cam.* 15.1–3, henceforth 15a):

The Gauls were of the Celtic stock, and their *numbers* were such, as it is said, that they abandoned their own country, which was not able to sustain them all, and set out in quest of another. They were many myriads of young warriors, and they took along with them a still greater number of women and children. Some of them crossed the Rhipaeian mountains, streamed off towards *the northern ocean*, and occupied the remotest parts of Europe; others settled between the Pyrenees and the Alps, near the Senones and the Celtorians, and dwelt there *a long time*. But at last they got a taste of wine, which was then for the first time brought them from Italy. They admired the drink so much, and were all so beside themselves with the novel pleasure which it gave, that they seized their arms, took along their families, and made off to the Alps, in quest of the land which produced such fruit, considering the rest of the world barren and wild.

οἱ δὲ Γαλάται τοῦ Κελτικοῦ γένους ὄντες ὑπὸ πλήθους λέγονται τὴν αὐτῶν ἀπολιπόντες, οὐκ οὔσαν αὐτάρκη τρέφειν ἅπαντας, ἐπὶ γῆς ζήτησιν ἐτέρας ὁρμῆσαι: μυριάδες δὲ πολλαὶ γενόμενοι νέων ἀνδρῶν καὶ μαχίμων, ἔτι δὲ πλείους παίδων καὶ γυναικῶν ἄγοντες, οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν βόρειον Ὠκεανόν ὑπερβαλόντες τὰ Ῥιπαῖα ὄρη ῥύηναι καὶ τὰ ἔσχατα τῆς Εὐρώπης κατασχεῖν, οἱ δὲ μετὰ ξὺ Πυρρῆνης ὄρους καὶ τῶν Ἀλπεων ἰδρυθέντες ἐγγὺς Σενώνων καὶ Κελτορίων¹⁹ κατοικεῖν χρόνον πολύν ὥστ' ὅτι οἶνου γευσάμενοι τότε πρῶτον ἐξ Ἰταλίας διακομισθέντος οὕτως ἄρα θαυμάσαι τὸ πόμα καὶ πρὸς τὴν καινότητα τῆς ἡδονῆς ἑκφρονες γενέσθαι πάντες, ὥστε ἀράμενοι τὰ ὄπλα καὶ γενεὰς ἀναλαβόντες ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀλπεὶς φέρεσθαι καὶ ζητεῖν ἐκεῖνην τὴν γῆν, ἣ τοιοῦτον καρπὸν ἀναδίδωσι, τὴν δ' ἄλλην ἄκαρπον ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ ἀνήμερον. (underline added)

Describing the Gauls' journey from their homeland to the remotest parts of Europe, Plutarch insists that the first cause for their migration was internal; even the craving for land is presented as if the Gauls' original abode could not sustain them.²⁰ This places Plutarch in a tradition which emphasized social and environmental factors as causes for this migration.²¹ After departing, the Gauls dwelt between the Pyrenees and the Alps for a long time (χρόνον πολύν). The second movement from their native soil was towards Italy. Some ancient authors introduce the story of the Celtic migration and settlement in Italy as a prologue to the sack of Rome.²² Only Livy (5.33–5) and Trogus (*ap.* Justin, 20.5.7) chronologically separate the Celtic invasion to Italy and the events leading to the capture of the city.²³ Plutarch seems to follow the latter view, by drawing a line between the first movement of the Gauls and the second

clash (apparently accepting Livy's scepticism, 5.33.5-11), yet he inserts this digression (Chapters 15-16) in relation to the Gauls' attack on Clusium and Rome (14.3, 17.1), and thus appears nonetheless to associate the two events.²⁴ After he attributes internal factors to the first wave of migration, the narrator appears to be following another tradition, which ascribed an external cause to the Celtic migration to Italy, and specifically laid the blame on wine.²⁵ It was the Gauls' acquaintance with Italian wine, so we are told, that disrupted their quiet life and made them lead their families into the land that produced this wonderful beverage.²⁶

At this point Plutarch interrupts his narrative and inserts another digression (the second half of Chapter 15, henceforth 15b), the story of the man who introduced wine to the Gauls and the Gauls to Italy. He was an Etruscan nobleman called Arron:²⁷

The man who introduced wine to them, and was first and foremost in sharpening their appetite for Italy, is said to have been Arron, a Tuscan. He was a man of prominence, and by nature not prone to evil, but had met with the following misfortune. He was guardian of an orphan boy who was heir to the greatest wealth in the city, and of amazing beauty, Lucumo by name. This Lucumo from his youth up had lived with Arron, and when he came to man's estate, did not leave his house, but pretended to take delight in his society. He had, however, corrupted Arron's wife, and been corrupted by her, and *for a long time* kept the thing a secret. But at last the passions of both culprits increased upon them so that they could neither put away their desires nor longer hide them, wherefore the young man made open attempt to remove the woman and have her to wife. Her husband brought the case to trial, but was defeated by Lucumo, owing to the *multitude* of his friends and his lavish outlays of money, and forsook the city. Learning about the Gauls, he betook himself to them, and led them on their *expedition* to Italy.

ὁ δ' εἰσαγαγὼν τὸν οἶνον πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ παροξύνας ἐπὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν μάλιστα καὶ πρῶτος Ἄρρων λέγεται γενέσθαι Τυρρηνός, ἀνὴρ ἐπιφανής καὶ φύσει μὲν οὐ πονηρός, συμφορᾷ δὲ τοιαύτη χρησάμενος. ἦν ἐπίτροπος παιδὸς ὀρφανοῦ πλούτῳ τε πρῶτου τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ θαυμαζομένου κατ' εἶδος, ὄνομα Λουκούμῳ. οὗτος ἐκ νέου παρὰ τῷ Ἄρρῳ δίαίταν εἶχε, καὶ μειράκιον ὧν οὐκ ἀπέλιπε τὴν οἰκίαν, ἀλλὰ προσεποιεῖτο χαίρειν συνῶν ἐκείνῳ. καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐλάνθανε διεφθαρκῶς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ διεφθαρκένος ὑπ' ἐκείνης: ἤδη δὲ πόρρω τοῦ πάθους ἀμφοτέρων γεγονότων καὶ μὴτ' ἀφείναι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν μήτε κρύπτειν ἔτι δυναμένων, ὁ μὲν νεανίσκος ἐπεχειρεῖ φανερώς ἀποσπάσας ἔχειν τὴν ἄνθρωπον, ὁ δ' ἀνὴρ ἐπὶ δίκην ἐλθὼν καὶ κρατούμενος πλήθει φίλων καὶ χρημάτων δαπάναις ὑπὸ τοῦ Λουκούμῳ ἐξέλιπε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ: καὶ πυθόμενος τὰ τῶν Γαλατῶν ἦκεν εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ καθηγήσατο τῆς εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν στρατείας. (underline added)

While Arron and the wine element were inseparable in the original version of the story (cf. Livy, 5.33.3-4), Plutarch is careful to differentiate between the account relating the Gauls' entrance to Italy (15a) and Arron's departure toward the Gauls

(15b) – in the first an internal cause for the journey, in the second an external cause for action. There are several versions related to the person who had done harm to Arron, namely Lucumo;²⁸ here he is presented as an orphaned rich boy who was in his custody and stayed in his house even after reaching manhood. Secretly, this ungrateful young man was engaged in a corrupting activity involving Arron's wife (διεφθορακῶς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ διεφθαρμένος ὑπ' ἐκείνης).²⁹ Again the narrator uses the time expression 'for a long time' (χρόνον πολύν), employed earlier for the Gauls penetrating and dwelling in a foreign country. When the young man tried to openly detach Arron's wife from his former guardian, Arron brought the case to trial, but was defeated, because of the 'multitude' of the young man's friends. The narrator again utilizes a word previously used of the Gauls (πλήθος). While in the other versions, Arron is an Etruscan from Clusium (cf. Livy, 5.33.3), who led the Gauls to Etruria, Plutarch distances him from that city, and transfers him to another place (presumably in the Po valley) as well as backward in time.³⁰ This makes Arron a mediator in spatio-temporal terms, as befits his intermediary role in the story. Arron left his city and went straight to the Gauls, apparently deterred from any form of legal or limiting action, and chose a different course, which was to unleash an external force upon Italy; he invited the Gauls to Italy on a fateful march.

It is interesting how Plutarch deconstructs an original story, only to present it as two unrelated digressions, which are left for the reader to unite. For the two paragraphs, set in the same chapter, are in fact linked by phraseology as well as by plot. The combination of the two scenes associates a person with no supporters (Arron) with a leaderless multitude (Gauls).³¹ Both this person and the Gauls are driven away from their respective countries by the existence of large numbers (πλήθος). Arron is portrayed as creating two monsters: one he inadvertently produces in his own home, and the other he willingly leads to drive away the first, when inciting the Gauls to come against Italy. Both monsters evidently overstay their welcome. The ethnographic digression on the Gauls seems to be isolated and irrelevant to the rest of the work, but in fact it touches upon many themes of the *Life* of Camillus. Wine appears later in the biography as causing the downfall of the occupiers of Rome, when they are weakened by it (*Cam.* 23.7).³² Wine thus variously invites the Gauls into Italy and ultimately leads to their ejection, or alternatively, incites them into action and numbs their senses.³³ The mention of a multitude points at the 'people' in Rome, alluding to the Republican struggle of the orders which is also prominent in the *Life* (e.g. *Cam.* 1.2, 7–9, 11–12, 18, 31, 37–8, 39.1, 42.1).³⁴ In particular, the depiction of Gauls seeking nourishment and afterwards pleasure may echo the stereotype of the urban plebs' only two concerns, as portrayed by one of Plutarch's near contemporaries (Juvenal, *Sat.* 10.81).³⁵ This presentation is in line with an anti-plebeian tone noticeable in the biography.³⁶

But the most important role of this digression is the way Plutarch uses it to characterize the hero. In particular, he appears to make an association of the person and the body politic, thus providing a public parallel of an individual's virtue and vice.³⁷ The depiction of the young man who succeeds in expelling and replacing Arron from within the same house and the same city gives the allegory of an altered inner constitution, whereby the passions gain the upper hand and oust any form of domestic control (which parallels the rational side of the human soul).³⁸ Conversely, the Gauls,

who are first seen on the move, changing their abode twice, end up organized for an orderly military campaign (στρατείας). This presentation may imply a constant change of outer formations for the same group, like attempts to regiment unbridled emotions.³⁹ This is again related to the theme of the internal struggle within Rome, whose outcome (selecting a plebeian consul) amounts to a new constitution (cf. 42.2: παρὰ τὸν καθεστῶτα νόμον), but one which still gives the impression of being the same old system, for it reinstalls the consulship.⁴⁰

This point can also be seen clearly in the following Chapter (16), which details the consequence of Arron's action and the Gallic occupation of northern Italy:

The Gauls burst in and straightway mastered all the country which the Tuscans occupied of old, namely, that stretching from the Alps down to both seas, the names of which bear witness to the story. *For the northern sea* is called Adria, from the Tuscan city of Adria; the southern is called outright the Tuscan Sea. This whole country is studded with trees, has excellent pasturage for flocks and herds, and an abundance of rivers. It had also eighteen cities, large and fair, well equipped for profitable commerce and for sumptuous living. These the Gauls took away from the Tuscans and occupied themselves. *But this happened long before the time of which I speak.*

οἱ δ' ἐμβαλόντες εὐθὺς ἐκράτουν τῆς χώρας ὅσῃν τὸ παλαιὸν οἱ Tyrrhenoi κατεῖχον, ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀλπεων ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρως καθήκουσαν τὰς θαλάσσας, ὡς καὶ τοῦνομα μαρτυρεῖ τῷ λόγῳ, τὴν μὲν γὰρ βόρειον θάλατταν Ἀδρίαν καλοῦσιν ἀπὸ Tyrrhenικῆς πόλεως Ἀδρίας, τὴν δὲ πρὸς νότον κεκλιμένην ἄντικρυς Tyrrhenικὸν πέλαγος, πᾶσα δ' ἐστὶ δενδρόφυτος αὕτη καὶ θρέμμασιν εὐβοτος καὶ κατάρρουτος ποταμοῖς. καὶ πόλεις εἶχεν ὀκτωκαίδεκα καλὰς καὶ μεγάλας καὶ κατεσκευασμένας πρὸς τε χρηματισμὸν ἐργατικῶς καὶ πρὸς δίαιταν πανηγυρικῶς, ἃς οἱ Γαλάται τοὺς Tyrrhenοὺς ἐκβαλόντες αὐτοὶ κατέσχον. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπράχθη συχνῶ τινι χρόνῳ πρότερον. (underline added)

Plutarch's presentation of this invasion in a textual form of a digression is one of the passages in which his unique artistry can be seen. The Gauls invade and master the land which was previously occupied by the Etruscans. The earlier names of the 18 cities of the Etruscans remain, but the inhabitants have changed.⁴¹ Here a new content (Gauls) fits an old structure (site and cities), which is maintained though its material embodiment has altered. Yet, even in this new land, the Gauls resume a peaceful and pastoral existence, the exact same way of life they pursued in their previous country. Once again we have the same content (same demeanour) appearing in two different forms (or countries: Gaul, Italy). That Plutarch meant this particular reading to be understood is insinuated by certain phrases and motifs in the two chapters. Note the repetition of an expression in two different chapters: τὸν βόρειον Ὠκεανὸν in Chapter 15, and τὴν βόρειον θάλατταν in Chapter 16; this recurrence in two different chapters echoes the idea of maintaining an old content in two different countries or places. Conversely, in the very same Chapter (16), the same idea is

repeated through a change of substance: note the alteration of subject between οἱ Τυρρηνοὶ κατεῖχον ... οἱ Γαλάται τοὺς Τυρρηνοὺς ... κατέσχον, and the change of prefixes between the verbs (ἐμβαλόντες ... ἐκβαλόντες). Note also the structure of the entire digression:

(15a) (i) Gauls driven out yet (ii) lured into a new place.

(15b) Arron driven out.

(16) Gauls already inside a new country.

Within the same textual location (*Camillus* 15) Plutarch presents the second story (about Arron and the boy) as driving out and replacing the first ethnographic excursus (corresponding to what we described as replacing material content in an old form, as it were). Ironically, while the content tells of Arron being expelled from his city, the story of Arron itself ousts the former section. Plutarch also appears to be giving the *same* ethnographic digression in two separate textual settings (Chapters 15 and 16 of the *Camillus*) in a way that gives this specific type of depiction a unique place within the *Life* (this is consistent with what we described as repeating old content in a new form). The first ethnographic digression spills over to the next chapter, as it were. To use the imagery of wine, which is predominant in the story, we have here either new wine in old wineskins or old wine in new vessels.⁴²

By employing digression of an ethnographic/geographic type, treating the Gauls, their features and dwelling, Plutarch thus utilizes two features of this literary genre in his writing: (1) a form alien to that of biography; (2) the unique twofold nature of ethnography, with both distinct formal features and subject matter. Mirroring these traits, the ethnographic portions of the text succeed in achieving two goals. First, they stress the motif of an incursion, with ethnography intruding into the biographical portrayal just as the Gauls enter a foreign country (Italy). Second, the play of form and content links the narrator with the character of the hero. The narrator, who chooses to incorporate ethnography within the text of the *Life*, initially lets this section go unrestrained, which is seen in his lenient attitude towards the Gauls' dominating two chapters of the biography (with no reference whatsoever to the hero Camillus). Then, however, the narrator elects to stop the digression and to hold back the presence of the Gauls in the text, with the phrase, 'But this happened long before the time of which I speak' (ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἐπράχθη συχνῶ τινι χρόνῳ πρότερον). The narrator seems to be mimicking the exact behaviour of Arron, who tried in vain to control the unruly boy he had neglected to restrain; of note is the reference to time (χρόνῳ), which abruptly throws the entire story to a distant time.⁴³ Moreover, it might seem that the very employment of a digression, which is not explicitly relevant to the hero's life story, allegorically highlights Camillus' absence from the city after his expulsion (*Cam.* 12.4–13.1).⁴⁴ The narrator would thus seem to be acting in Camillus' stead by repelling the Gauls. There is a sense in which the entire digression used by the narrator chimes with the protagonist's demeanour and is not there just to emphasize his non-appearance. For the digression in fact echoes the same ploy employed by his hero: in Chapter 9.2, it is stated that Camillus invaded the territory of the Faliscans and laid siege to Falerii, in order to turn the thoughts of the citizens to other matters and keep them away from internal problems. Yet, whereas he diverted the people's

interest outwards, Camillus has also insisted on physically staying put in Rome after its capture by the Gauls (*Cam.* 31–32.5; *Livy* 5.49.8–55), thus virtually holding back a migration to Veii. It would seem that a certain duality is discernible in these actions of Camillus, reflected in both the narrator's resort to a digression and his effort to end it. It would appear that this duality reflects the same division in Camillus' *psyche* between aspects where passions seem to take over completely, and others where passions are ordered or appear to be so.⁴⁵

Theseus 5

Treating Greeks, and not only barbarians, as the subject matter for ethnographic observation was a known Greek practice, used mainly on groups construed as 'others' (i.e. Spartans) or the Greek of previous times.⁴⁶ One example can be seen in Plutarch's *Life* of the Athenian hero Theseus. As mentioned above, at the beginning of this biography, Plutarch joins the treatment of stories that took place in mythic periods with depictions of distant locations in geography, in which were usually subsumed descriptions of exotic groups. In one of the following chapters of the *Theseus*, these two modes of representation are joined, with an ethnographic/geographic depiction of an antique practice. As Theseus reaches maturity, he is portrayed following a custom of youth who has come of age to go to Delphi and sacrifice some of their hair to the god.⁴⁷ This is an opportunity for the narrator to begin an ethnographic and historical digression (*Thes.* 5):

Since it was still a custom at that time for youth who were coming of age to go to Delphi and sacrifice some of their hair to the god, Theseus went to Delphi for this purpose, and they say there is a place there which still to this day is called the Theseia from him. But he sheared only the fore part of his head, just as Homer said the Abantes did, and this kind of tonsure was called Theseis after him. Now the Abantes were the first to cut their hair in this manner, not under instruction from the Arabians, as some suppose, nor yet in emulation of the Mysians, but because they were war-like men and close fighters, who had learned beyond all other men to force their way into close quarters with their enemies ...

ἔθους δὲ ὄντος ἔτι τότε τοὺς μεταβαίνοντας ἐκ παίδων ἐλθόντας εἰς Δελφοὺς ἀπάρχεσθαι τῷ θεῷ τῆς κόμης, ἦλθε μὲν εἰς Δελφοὺς ὁ Θησεύς, καὶ τόπον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὴν Θησεϊάν ἔτι νῦν ὀνομάζεσθαι λέγουσιν, ἐκείρατο δὲ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὰ πρόσθεν μόνον, ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος ἔφη τοὺς Ἀβαντας· καὶ τοῦτο τῆς κουρᾶς τὸ γένος Θησηΐς ὠνομάσθη δι' ἐκεῖνον. οἱ δὲ Ἀβαντες ἐκείραντο πρῶτοι τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον οὐχ ὑπ' Ἀράβων διδασθέντες, ὥς ἔνιοι νομίζουσιν, οὐδὲ Μυσοῦς ζηλώσαντες, ἀλλ' ὄντες πολεμικοὶ καὶ ἀγχέμαχοι, καὶ μάλιστα δὴ πάντων εἰς χεῖρας ὠθειῖσθαι τοῖς ἐναντίοις μεμαθηκότες ...

Theseus is thus reported to have trimmed only the front part of his head and kept the rest of his hair, causing this haircut to be identified with the hero and later to be called

after him by the name of 'Theseis', so we are told.⁴⁸ The narrator then intervenes and claims that this manner of cutting one's hair was actually the same as that attributed to the Abantes by Homer (cf. *Il.* 2.542: ὅπιθεν κομόωντες).⁴⁹ As the Abantes were the first to do so, this statement has the implication that Theseus may have emulated them. The narrator continues: the Abantes were the originators of this hairstyle; they did not learn it from the Arabs, as some suppose, nor imitated the Mysians, but developed it themselves, because they were belligerent men and known to fight in close quarters.⁵⁰ He then quotes some lines of Archilochus testifying to their way of fighting:⁵¹

Archilochus is witness to this in the following words:

'Not many bows indeed will be stretched tight, nor frequent slings
Be whirled, when Ares joins men in the moil of war
Upon the plain, but swords will do their mournful work;
For this is the warfare wherein those men are expert
Who lord it over Euboea and are famous with the spear.'

ὥς μαρτυρεῖ καὶ Ἀρχίλοχος ἐν τούτοις:
'οὐ τοι πόλλ' ἐπὶ τόξα τανύσσεται οὐδὲ θαμειαὶ
σφενδόναί, εὖτ' ἂν δὴ μῶλον Ἄρης συνάγῃ
ἐν πεδίῳ, ξιφέων δὲ πολύστονον ἔσσεται ἔργον:
ταύτης γὰρ κείνοι δαίμονές εἰσι μάχης
δεσπότης Εὐβοίας δουρικλυτοί.'

Apparently, the reason for this style was that the Abantes' enemies would not have an opportunity to hold them by the hair.⁵² The narrator then moves on to the case of Alexander the Great, who ordered his generals to shave the beards of the soldiers for the same reason.⁵³

Therefore, in order that they might not give their enemies a hold by their hair, they cut it off. And Alexander of Macedon doubtless understood this when, as they say, he ordered his generals to have the beards of their Macedonians shaved, since these afforded the readiest hold in battle.

ὅπως οὖν μὴ παρέχοιεν ἐκ τῶν τριχῶν ἀντίληψιν τοῖς πολεμίοις
ἀπεκείραντο. τοῦτο δὲ ἀμέλει καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Μακεδόνα
ἐννοήσαντά φασι προστάξαι τοῖς στρατηγοῖς ξυρεῖν τὰ γένεια τῶν
Μακεδόνων, ὡς λαβὴν ταύτην ἐν ταῖς μάχαις οὔσαν προχειροτάτην.

This seemingly needless string of details seems to serve no other purpose than to show off the author's vast knowledge of data coming from periods separated by time and location. It is, however, closely connected to the rest of the biography and to the characterization of the hero. The motif of hair would appear later, when Theseus would abduct Helen (*Thes.* 31.1-2); for she is mentioned in a verse attributed to Hereas as the one with the 'fair-locks' (*Thes.* 32.7: Ἑλένης ... ἡῦκόμοιο). It was Theseus' refusal to give Helen up that led to an attack of the Dioscuri on Athens, to the capture of Theseus' mother,⁵⁴ his temporary imprisonment by Aἰδωνεύς and downfall (*Thes.* 31-34), the contempt towards him in Athens (*Thes.* 32.1, 35.3-4) and his eventual departure from the country (*Thes.* 35.5).⁵⁵ His unwillingness to surrender parts of his

hair when coming of age thus anticipates his reluctance to surrender Helen and its problematic results.⁵⁶ The sacrifice of part of his hair, while retaining the other may also allude to a trait in his character exemplified by his inability later on to give up power (*Thes.* 24.4). Euboea, the land of the Abantes, is the place to which Theseus will later send his children for refuge after despairing from fighting the Athenian factions (*Thes.* 35.5). So this digression may provide a foreshadowing of events to come and is sensibly inserted in the narrative. Unlike the Abantes, who were true soldiers, Theseus did not come up with this haircut because of the pragmatic necessities of combat. This subtly points to the fact that Theseus was not a real fighter.⁵⁷ And indeed Plutarch is careful not to present Theseus as a warrior in any scene, even on occasions when we would have expected it, like the battle against the Amazons (*Thes.* 26.2, 27.1).⁵⁸ Our appreciation of the sarcasm increases as Theseus' claim for glory in this chapter consists of having invented a haircut, and even here he ironically faces opposition from the Abantes. The epithet ἡῦκόμοιο mentioned above as referring to Helen's hair is Homeric (cf. *Il.* 1.36), and alludes to one place in particular, namely *Il.* 3.329: δῖος Ἀλέξανδρος Ἑλένης πόσις ἡῦκόμοιο ('goodly Alexander lord of fair-haired Helen'). The mention of Alexander, called πόσις, with its connotations of being a 'lawful husband' (LSJ, s.v. A) to the abducted Helen, evokes again the theme of illegitimate appropriation, reflected in the debate on the proper inventor of this haircut. Surely the mention of Alexander at the end of this chapter is meant to stress this allusion. We thus see that several vices of Theseus make their way into the story at this point, such as excessive honour-seeking and self-indulgence.⁵⁹ It is no wonder that this section comes immediately before the parade of depraved villains in Theseus' way to Athens is presented (*Thes.* 8–11: Periphetes, Sinis the Pine-bender, Phaea the 'wild sow', Sciron, Cercyon the Arcadian, and Damastes).⁶⁰ It would seem that the appearance of these creatures is the logical outcome of an episode in which unbridled passions are seen, and thus they can be viewed as the embodiment of Theseus' vices.⁶¹

However, it is the ethnographic dimension of this digression which links it even further with the narrative. The narrator presents the Abantes' invention of this hairstyle as original, and in this way belittles the name and fame of Theseus. In an attempt to provide a 'contextualization' of this heroic haircut, ethnography seems to serve as breaking one myth of Theseus' story, yet, at the same time, helps create another.⁶² The narrator mentions the verse from Homer and quotes a passage from Archilochus to prove his argument, texts which are not internally related; hair does not appear in the second passage at all, let alone the word 'Abantes'.⁶³ We may be dealing with an ethnographic description of the Abantes suggested here for the first time by Plutarch.⁶⁴ If this is the case, then the narrator himself is assumed to be creating a new tradition, like the Abantes he describes. Moreover, in taking materials which were extant beforehand, and joining them in a new story which is attributed to a certain group, the narrator fashions in some sense its memory, from which its feeling of belonging generally evolves. The narrator moulds a memory by the attribution of certain characteristics.⁶⁵ This is a theme linked directly to the story of the unification of Athens (the 'synoikism') and the creation of the *demos*, the great political act of Theseus (24–5: πανδημίαν τινὰ καθιστάντος).⁶⁶ In the narrator's relation to the content of his stories, he comes close to Theseus' character. For through the digression,

and the tradition the narrator attributes to the Abantes (which he seems to create), he appears to highlight the importance of the people while at the same time trying to contain it within a detached descriptive framework. An anticipation of later occurrences is once more seen in the short digression of Chapter 5, when this creation of a tradition and a memory of a nation (the Abantes) works to harm Theseus, for the Abantes are posited as Theseus' rivals. In fact this imagined conflict between Abantes and Theseus, like the entire *Life* of this mythic hero, may be seen as an allegory of the political history of Athenian imperialism and the internal struggles of Greece.⁶⁷ While Greeks are splitting hairs on the question of who invented a haircut,⁶⁸ it was the Macedonians who eventually benefited from this quarrel and became supreme. It was Alexander who turned out to be the true heir to these former powers; hence the allusion to him and the regulations concerning beards.⁶⁹

Pompey 35

Moving on to our last example, let us examine an ethnographic detour in the *Life* of Pompey. In the middle of the description of the Mithridatic wars there is a short chapter which contains a digression (*Pomp.* 35). Pompey is pursuing the ever elusive king Mithridates VI Eupator, when he hears that the tribe of the Albanians have revolted. Pompey is forced to turn back, and to cross the River Cyrrus again (πάλιν). Thinking that the army will pass through a waterless country, Pompey orders 10,000 skins to be filled with water and then advance. When the Albanian army is observed, it seems to the Romans to be poorly equipped and clad in the skins of wild beasts. Little is said about the actual battle, except that Pompey fought against the brother of the king, was wounded by him, but eventually killed him.⁷⁰ The narrator then remarks:

In this battle it is said that there were also Amazons fighting on the side of the Barbarians, and that they came down from the mountains *about the river Thermodon*. For when the Romans were despoiling the Barbarians after the battle, they came upon Amazonian shields and buskins; but no body of a woman was seen. The Amazons inhabit the parts of the Caucasus mountains that reach down to the Hyrcanian Sea, and they do not border on the Albani, but Gelae and Leges dwell between. With these peoples, who meet them *by the river Thermodon*, they consort for two months every year; then they go away and live by themselves.

ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ μάχῃ λέγονται καὶ Ἀμαζόνες συναγωνίσασθαι τοῖς βαρβάροις, ἀπὸ τῶν περὶ τὸν Θερμῶδοντα ποταμὸν ὁρῶν καταβάσαι. μετὰ γὰρ τὴν μάχην σκυλεύοντες οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι τοὺς βαρβάρους πέλταις Ἀμαζονικαῖς καὶ κοθόρνοις ἐνετύγχανον, σῶμα δὲ οὐδὲν ὥφθη γυναικεῖον. νέμονται δὲ τοῦ Καυκάσου τὰ καθήκοντα πρὸς τὴν Ὑρκανίαν θάλασσαν, οὐχ ὁμοροῦσαι τοῖς Ἀλβανοῖς, ἀλλὰ Γέλαι καὶ Λήγες οἰκοῦσι διὰ μέσου· καὶ τούτοις ἔτους ἐκάστου δύο μῆνας εἰς ταῦτό φοιτῶσαι περὶ τὸν Θερμῶδοντα ποταμὸν ὁμιλοῦσιν, εἴτα καθ' αὐτὰς ἀπαλλαγεῖσαι βιοτεύουσιν. (underline added)

It is said that Amazons came from their place near the River Thermodon to fight on the side of the Albanians. This belief was based on the fact that Amazonian shields were reportedly found discarded on the battlefield, although of the Amazons themselves there was no sign since no body of a woman was seen.⁷¹

The narrator continues to digress: the Amazons inhabit the Caucasus Mountains, meet with the Albanians, spend time in their company for two months every year by the River Thermodon and go away to live in seclusion.⁷² This piece of information would surely seem to any reader an unrelated digression, almost a footnote. On first impression, it appears detached from the rest of the story, from Pompey's life and even from its immediate context; it appears to form a clear example of a pointless aside. Yet, again the digression may in fact be firmly linked with the rest of the chapter and the biography. We see a connection between the two parts of the chapter in that in the first half Pompey crosses a river twice (the River Cyrenus), while in the second a river is mentioned twice (the River Thermodon). There is also a common thread to the chapter, in which the idea of a pale substitute seems to predominate: Pompey has to fight Albanians instead of Mithridates, there are skins containing water instead of rivers, skins instead of proper armour, Amazonian shields instead of Amazons, the brother of the king instead of the king himself, and indeed a whole poor description of a battle as compared with a real narrative of warfare.⁷³ The battle makes much more impression by its absence than by its presence: exactly like the Amazons, or Mithridates. This idea links up with one of the themes of the *Life of Pompey*: the Roman protagonist repeatedly creates an impact by not being really there (e.g. *Pomp.* 5.1, 30.5, 56.2).⁷⁴ All throughout the biography, Pompey's image has more power and authority than his real being, and sometimes a life of its own.⁷⁵ When the soldiers presumed that the Amazons had fought them, they filled in gaps in their knowledge and resorted to images, but by so doing they enlivened an image and gave it immense force in a convincing narrative.⁷⁶ So great was the impact of this story that it even swayed the narrator, who began the account by being more sceptical as to the Amazons' presence and ended with describing them as truly existing.⁷⁷ Some border between reality and myth was apparently crossed, by the soldiers, by the Amazons and by the narrator in the ethnographic digression.⁷⁸

Ironically, the narrator tells of the Amazons and crosses the border to the realm of legend at exactly the same time when these mythic creatures supposedly traversed the boundary to help the Albanians. When the narrator returns to describe the shields left on the ground, the Amazons are back in their home country, and when the narrator again portrays the habits of the Amazons in their abode, they are described as leaving it to unite with the Albanians in the real world. The narrator seems to chase the Amazons exactly like Pompey pursues Mithridates. Earlier it was seen that ethnography is used by Plutarch to make or break a myth. Here the two processes seem to be combined, for an image is inflated to such a degree that it eventually breaks open, as it were, highlighting reality as it is.⁷⁹ Following the imaginary world of Pompey and the soldiers, the reader progresses from the Herodotean overtones of the order to fill 10,000 skins with water⁸⁰ to a re-enactment of the Amazonomachy,⁸¹ but when we reach the Amazons, we halt. Unlike the well known myth of Theseus, Pompey does not seem to fight the Amazons. Unlike the tale of Alexander and the celebrated

queen, the Amazons do not wish to mate with Pompey.⁸² Plutarch makes them prefer the Albanians, the enemies of Pompey. This choice shows us that compared with the Macedonian king, Pompey is a pale substitute. Pompey is no Alexander. You cannot really cross the same river twice.⁸³

* * *

The digressions in Plutarch's *Lives*, especially of the ethnographic kind, only *look* like 'misplaced footnotes' when the biographies are read too literally, or when the significant layers of meaning lurking in the text are ignored. Yet, these passages are in fact integral parts of the composition and add significant insights to the apprehension of the heroes, their life stories and human nature at large. That the ethnographic digressions are so closely connected to the rest of the biography as to render them not digressions at all, should not be surprising. Each of Plutarch's *Lives* should be seen as a unified work, where the sections are interrelated in terms of both content and form in order to present various facets of the hero's character. Rather than assigning Plutarch's ethnographic digressions to footnotes, these passages should be taken and analyzed with the entire work, and their connections to other passages that seem unrelated to the story, like scientific or literary digressions, should be studied in full. On the plot level, Plutarch's use of ethnographic descriptions of foreign nations generally reflect on either the great statesman's own city or country or on his political career. Yet, the calculated use of these vignettes in the form of digressions is meant by Plutarch to serve other purposes as well: they serve artistic aims in presentation and moral goals in shedding light on the *psyche* and *ethos* of the protagonist – or, to be precise, on his type of character.⁸⁴ This is true of the description of barbarians in particular, but is also true of Greeks and Romans. The study of Plutarch's ethnographic digressions, therefore, is important in three respects. First, in terms of plot, the digressions are related to the rest of the narrative despite the fact that they are removed from it; indeed, because they appear to be separated. The reader is led to understand that the story does not progress along one line, but moves continuously within a special structure, which includes the excursuses and the asides. Second, in relation to characterization, when it comes to the psychological constitution of the hero, ethnography is usually intended to point at the hero's realm of passions and vices, allegorized by the multitude of people portrayed. Finally, in relation to the narrator, the manner of treatment of this alien body of knowledge highlights his central role within the text; combining this point with the previous one shows that the narrator's position parallels that of the hero towards the emotions in his soul. Indeed, treating all these aspects together in Plutarch's entire biographical output will illustrate the way they are generally interrelated.

But this belongs to another discussion.

Notes

- 1 It is now commonly accepted that Plutarch is a highly original author, with his own agenda, ethical outlook and unique methods of narration, who adapted his sources and sometimes transformed them to suit his literary aims and moral goals. See in

- particular Stadter (1975), Pelling (1988, 2002), Brenk (1992), Duff (1999), Lamberton (2001); cf. the forthcoming two companions (Titchener and Zadorojnyi, Beck).
- 2 Russell (1963: 21) treats the digressions (antiquarian, philological and moral reflections) in the *Life* of Coriolanus as 'alien matter' and estimates its presence in the biography as 20 per cent (mostly in Chapters 11, 32 and 38). Cf. Russell (1966: 154) on *Lysander*. See Barrow (1967: 62–5); cf. Duff (2011: 229–30n. 80). Cf. Weizsacker (1931: 18, 67–72, 80) who terms some of these sections *eidologies* (more precise, *Akme-Eidologie*, see below). On digression in the *Moralia*, see, e.g. Swain (1989a: 514) on *De fort. Rom.* 324d.
 - 3 A stricter approach is presented by Verdegem (2010: 81): 'Plutarch ... regularly interrupts his narrative to comment on someone's actions or character traits, or to digress on difficult kinds of subjects. But such intermezzi are not strictly speaking narrative. Moreover, most of them are followed by an achronical passage or an ellipsis, i.e. an omission in the text of a part of the story. Since this means that the narrative does not simply resume at the point of the story where it broke off, the intermediate passages cannot really be considered true pauses.'
 - 4 On scientific digressions in Plutarch, in all some 40 digressions from eight scientific fields (physics and astronomy mainly, but also geography, geometry, zoology, medicine, psychology and music), see Boulogne (2008) and Desideri (1992). On geographic digressions in the *Alexander*, see Caballero Sanchez (1992). On authorial statements in several *Lives*, see Hillman (1994); cf. Hamilton (1992: 4204).
 - 5 The narrator presents these as exemplifying the character of the hero (*Alex.* 1.1). Cf. *Cato Min.* 37.10: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐχ ἥττον οἰόμενοι τῶν ὑπαίθρων καὶ μεγάλων πράξεων πρὸς ἐνδειξιν ἡθους καὶ κατανόησιν ἔχειν τινὰ σαφήνειαν ἐπὶ πλεον διήλθομεν ('Such incidents, now, in my opinion, quite as much as deeds of greatness and publicity, shed considerable light upon the perception and manifestation of character, and I have therefore recounted them at greater length'). Translations of passages from the *Lives* are those of the LCL (B. Perrin), sometimes slightly changed. Cf. Swain (1990: 199n. 23).
 - 6 For example, the letter revealing Servilia's affair with Caesar is found in *Cato* 24.1–3 and *Brut.* 5.3–4, but not in *Caesar*. Cf. Pelling (1985: 317–18). This presentation obviously adds to the character of the affair as a side-story. On Plutarch's cross-references, see Mewaldt (1907), Stoltz (1929), Pelling (2002: 7–10) and Nikolaidis (2005).
 - 7 On passages written in the scientific genre, see Boulogne (2008: 735n. 9). On the different (and relaxed) style of the side stories, see Pelling (1985: 329).
 - 8 Cf. *Dion* 21.6–9; *Alex.* 35.16. Cf. *Tim.* 15.1. Cf. Quint. 9.1.28 and Lausberg, 1998, § 340–2 (*Digressio*). Cf. Quint. 4.3.14 ('*extra ordinem excurrens tractatio*'). Cf. Otten (1984), Randa (1989) for digressions in rhetoric, particularly ancient. For digressions in historical works, see Cobet (1971) for Herodotus, and Schadewaldt (1929: 67–99) and Pothou (2009) for Thucydides.
 - 9 Cf. other sentiments along the same line, partially cited by Hillman (1994: 256n. 2). Notable is Wardman's verdict (1974: 174) on these sections: '[Plutarch's] mind did not have a dramatic cast and the pace is constantly slowed by digressions which admittedly instruct but often weaken one's attention to the story as a whole.' Cf. Langhorne (1770: preface, xiii) cited by Barrow (1967: 63): 'We often wished to throw out of the text into the notes those most tedious and digressive comments that spoil the beauty and order of the narrative, mortify the expectation, frequently,

- when it is most essentially interested, and destroy the natural influence of his story, by turning the attention into a different channel ... Every reader of Plutarch must have felt the pain of these unseasonable digressions.' The inclusion of digressions in biographies is usually criticized. See Horsfall (1982: 290–2) on Nepos (cf. his 'irrelevant digression' on *Pelop.* 16.3). The digressions were not clear to commentators or translators: In the LCL series one often finds Perrin using phrases like 'now to resume' even when the original Greek does not show it.
- 10 See Barrow (1967: 63); Lamberton (2001: 146). Cf. Garcia Moreno (1992: 144–5, on *Sert.* 9.5: in a polemic).
 - 11 Relaxation: Pelling (1985: 329) refers to digressions in *Cicero* (17, 19, 20, 24–8) as 'relaxing diversions,' carefully positioned after the narrative's highlight. Amazement: Hillman (1994: 258); cf. Boulogne (2008: 4). Making the reader think: cf. the opinion of Zadorojnyi (2005: 123), that the lengthy digression on the Spartan *skytalē* (*Lys.* 19.7–12), like other literacy-related episodes in ancient literature, induces more questions than supplies answers (*pace* Duff, 1999: 164–5).
 - 12 See Westlake (1938: 73) on *Tim.* 15.11; (1939: 13–14) on *Pelop.* 16.5–8, 25 ('contaminating miscellaneous sources'); Powell (1939: 229–31) on Alex. (the spurious Letters of Alexander); Russell (1963: 23n. 17) on *Cor.* 14, 19; Pelling (1979: 94 and n. 144) on *Caes.* 9.4–8, *Ant.* 33.2–4, 34.9; (1985: 317–18) on *Cic.* 17. Cf. Bosworth (1981: 5) on *Cim.* 12.5–13.3.
 - 13 Cf. Swain (1989b: 318) on *Tim.* 14.3–11, 15.9–11, 25; Affortunati and Scardigli (1992: 109) on *Pub.* 8, 11, 13, 15.
 - 14 Cf. Sansone (1980), and following him Whitmarsh (2002: 189–90), on *Alexander*. See Duff (1999: 186–9) on *Lysander* 12. See Holland (2005: 271) on *Aem.* 14–15, 17. See Marasco (2008: 669) on *Per.* 24 (digression on Aspasia). See Duff (2008: 193–4) on the mention of Cleisthenes in *Per.* 3 as a paradigm for Pericles. See Pelling (2008: 542) on the 'Homeric' character of the digression at *Cor.* 32 that fits in well with the portrayal of the hero. Cf. Konrad (1994: 117) on authorial digressions on the hero's character as marking a major turn in his life (addressing *Sert.* 10.2–7). For the importance of the digression to the overall structure as marker of a significant section in the work, cf. Polman (1974: 172–6) on digressions marking passages of the hero's *acme*. Cf. Pelling (1988: 181, 192) on *Ant.* 24.9, 28–29; id. (1992: 21); id. (1996: xxix, xxii–xxv); Morón (2000: 472) on *Lys.* 17. In fact, readers who expect digressions from Plutarch take pains to explain their absence at some points: see Buszard (2005: 282–3), Verdegem (2008: 179, 180).
 - 15 The biographies betray traits of Hellenocentrism and were presumably intended for a Greek-dominated readership. Cf. Pelling (2002: 270–1); Duff (1999: 291n. 13, 302), (2007–8: 7–11).
 - 16 See Pelling (2002: 171–95).
 - 17 For another attempt to connect the unit of German Wars in *Mar.* 11–27 and the rest of that biography, see Carney (1960: 24–5).
 - 18 On Camillus, see Hubaux (1958); Cornell (1995: 309–26); Walter (2000); von Ungern-Sternberg (2001).
 - 19 Harrie (1927: 93ff.) proposes Βιτουρίγων (i.e. a Celtic sub-group, cf. Livy, 5.34.1, 5), which Carena, Manfredini and Piccirilli (1996 [1983]: 317) accept.
 - 20 On the use of multitudes in these portrayals of the Gauls, see Schmidt (1999: 149, 160).
 - 21 Cf. Polyb. 2.17.3; Diod. 14.113. Cf. Appian, *Gall.* Fr. 2. Cf. Rankin (1987: 103–8).
 - 22 Cf. Nepos (*ap.* Pliny, *NH* 17.124–5), who dates the capture of Melpum to the same

- day in which Camillus took Veii (396 BC); cf. Diodorus (14.113), who places their appearance in Italy in 391, and Polybius (1.6.1, 2.17.1–2.18.2), who puts it close to the customary, non-Varronian date for the capture of Rome, namely, 387–386 BC. See Walbank (1957: 46–8, 182, 185). Cf. Appian, *Gall.* Fr. 2. See Ellis (1998: 21–2) and Williams (2001: 101–2).
- 23 The truth is that Celtic settlement south of the Alps was much earlier. Livy (5.34.1) places it in the time of Tarquinius Priscus (c. 616–579 BC), but it was probably in the fifth century BC. See Grassi (1991), Williams (2001: 110–19). On Timagenes as the source for Livy and Trogus, see Ogilvie (1965: 701–2). On the literary tradition, see Wernicke (1991: 20–39). For Timaeus, see Sordi (1976/7: 115).
 - 24 Livy (5.33.2) also digresses on previous times when he arrives at the Gaulish attack against Clusium. On the Celts in Livy, see Kremer (1994: 50–80). Cf. the comment of Ogilvie (1965: 700–1) that the digression serves as a bridge between the two halves of the book and that it also acts to heighten suspense and focus attention on the drama which is about to unfold. On Plutarch's passage, see Willimas (2000: 106): 'Indeed, Plutarch says that there was a long interval between the two, despite the fact that it is his narrative of Camillus' part in saving Rome after the sack that occasions his account of the original invasion. Why he chose to adopt this particular tack is perhaps unclear, but it is a neat way of dovetailing two previously divergent tendencies within ancient accounts of the invasion.' A suggestion for this exposition is given below.
 - 25 Cf. Livy 5.33.3 (eam gentem traditur fama dulcedine frugum maximeque vini nova tum voluptate captam Alpes transisse agrosque ab Etruscis ante cultos possedissee; 'It is said that this nation, attracted by the report of the delicious fruits and especially of the wine [a pleasure new to them] crossed the Alps and took possession of the lands formerly cultivated by the Etruscans'); Dion. Hal. AR 13.11. The tradition probably went back to Cato (if the suggestion made by Peter, 1914: 65, to relate the fragment of Gell. NA 17.13.4 = Cato, *Orig.* 2.5 (Chassignet) to this story is correct).
 - 26 In reality, wine was a commodity known in the trade between Gauls and the Greeks and Etruscans. See Wells (1980: 66); cf. Diod. 5.26.3. Dionysius has Arrons pretending to travel on a trading journey.
 - 27 Arrons in Livius 5.33.3–4; cf. Dion. Hal. AR 13. 10.1–2 (Ἀρρων). A different name is mentioned by Pliny (*NH* 12.2.5: Helico), who makes him a Helvetian, a Gaul, with no use of the intermediate group of the Etruscans. See Martínez-Pinna (1978) for a treatment of source criticism.
 - 28 Arron was guardian to a young person also in Livy, 5.33.3 (*cui tutor is fuerat*). Dionysius (AR 13. 10.1) has Arron as the guardian of the son of Lucumo. In all versions, the boy seduced Arron's wife. On this figure in Etruscan Mythology, see Heurgon (1961: 274, 283ff.). Lucumo was probably the Etruscan for 'king' (**lauxme* or **lauxume*); see Carena, Manfredini and Piccirilli (1996 [1983]: 318) on the question of whether it denoted a proper name or reflected the Etruscan monarchic institution.
 - 29 Cf. Dion. Hal. AR 13.10.2 : τὴν διάνοιαν τῆς ἀνθρώπου διέφθειρεν ('corrupted her mind').
 - 30 Cf. Williams (2001: 105–6).
 - 31 The exact same device is used by Herodotus at the beginning and end of book 5: it starts with the description of a multitude without a leader in Thrace (5.3), and ends in the same region with the account of Aristagoras' death (5.126), a leader without

- followers. On the obvious literary closure of that book, see Greenwood and Irwin (2007: 11, 16, 142).
- 32 On the Celtic bibulous nature, see Plato, *Laws* 637d–e, Polyb. 2.19.4. Cf. Pelling (2002: 200).
- 33 Cf. the chaotic effect wine has on the Gauls in Livy's Camillus' speech (5.44.6). See Kremer (1994: 37–9).
- 34 For the struggle of the orders as a motif in the *Life*, cf. Pelling (2002: 132–3). Cf. de Blois (1992: 4583), Larmour (1992: 4177–8, 4196–8), Duff (2010: 58, 60–1, 63–5).
- 35 Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.36.4, Juv. 8.117–18.
- 36 Cf. *Cam.* 12.2, 39.4. Cf. 31.2, 36.1 and 42.1–2. Cf. the soldiers' denunciation of Camillus (*Cam.* 11.1). Plutarch's position against the 'people' or the masses is noticeable. Cf. Pelling (2002: 212, 217), de Blois (1992: 4578–80), Saïd (2005: 7–11). Cf. Duff (2010: 46) for stress given to the dangers of popular unrest.
- 37 This analogy essentially goes back to Plato's comparison of the soul and the *polis*, so that the state is a macrocosm of the man (cf. *Gorg.* 503d5–505b12; *Rep.* 2.368c–9a; 4.434d–45e; 5.462c–e; 8.544d–5c). See Neu (1971); Ferrari (2003); cf. Duff (1999: 93 and n. 86). Typically, Camillus' body suffers from the plague at the end (*Cam.* 43.1, which subtly evokes the comparison of politicians to physicians earlier, *Cam.* 9.3).
- 38 Plutarch adheres to the Platonic tenet, that reason should guide the irrational, lest emotions get out of control and become harmful. See Plut. *De virt. moral.*, 441d–443d. Cf. Dillon (1977: 194), Duff (1999: 72–6). Cf. Plat. *Rep.* 4.441e–442b, 444de.
- 39 See Fuhrmann (1964: 254–7); cf. Saïd (2005: 15, 20) on Plutarch's image of the army.
- 40 Cf. *Cam.* 1.2, 39.1, 42.1 vs. 42.7. On the annalistic tradition concerning the *leges Liciniae Sextiae* (367 BC), see von Fritz (1950) and Develin (1986); for proposals for revision, see Billows (1989: 114–18, 127–30).
- 41 See Malnati and Violante (1995) on Celtic presence in Etruria. Twelve cities in Livy, 5.33.9, Strabo, 5.4.3.
- 42 Cf. Mark 2.21–2; Matthew 9.16–17; Luke 5.36–39 for the expression involving old wine and a new coat. Cf. Kee (1970).
- 43 On Plutarch's narrator as mimicking his heroes, see Almagor (forthcoming (b)). Cf. the 'terminal abruptness' of the biography – as described by Pelling (2002: 386, n.70; cf. 2005: 338, n. 49) – in which the narrator seems to repeat this device. For the importance of temporal references in the biography, note the very last words of the biography (*Cam.* 43: κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον ἀποθανόντες, 'died at the same time').
- 44 Cf. Pelling (2005: 335–6), Duff (2010: 61).
- 45 For Camillus' moderation, see *Cam.* 1.4, 11.3, 24.4 and Larmour (1992: 4185–6). On the other hand, Camillus can barely restrain the looting done by his soldiers: 8.2 and cf. the penultimate scene (42.7) where the people and Senate escort him home. His arrogant pride at 7.1 almost necessitates the envy and hatred of the people to balance it (7.2).
- 46 See Cartledge (1993: 95–7, 232) on Spartans as alien, and different from the traditional Greeks.
- 47 On dedication of hair, cf. *Il.* 23.141. On cutting hair as an Athenian rite of passage, cf. Theoph. *Charac.* 21.3 (καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἀποκεῖραι ἀγαγὼν εἰς Δελφοῦς; 'he will take his son to Delphi to have his hair cut'). Cf. *Anth. Palat.* 6.278–9. See Ampolo and Manfredini (1988: 201–2).

- 48 This type of haircut was almost required of warriors because of hoplite fighting and the adoption of the helmet, which covered the front and the side of head. See Austin (1972) on a representation of Hector; cf. Boardman (1973). On Theseus' hair-style in Attic iconography, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1971: 96–7), who suggests that in a certain red figure cup where the hero lifts a rock, the coiffure adopted for the hero is meant to reflect the *Theseis*. Simon (1963: 45) claims the same for the calyx ('Argonaut') krater in Paris by the Niobid painter.
- 49 The Achaeans are depicted as growing their hair long (κάρη κομόωντας: *Il.* 2.11, 28, 51, 65, 323, 443, 472; 3.43, 79; 4.261, 268; 7.85, 328, 442, 448, 459, 472, 476; 8.53, 341, 510; 9.45; 13.310; 18.6, 359; 19.69), a phrase which would make the Abantes' hairstyle to mean long at the back and short at the fore. It is therefore unique and the epithet is meant to mark them. See Kirk (1985: 271–2). Cf. Synesius' *Encomium on Baldness*, 1 (ταχύ τε ἀπεδείχθην ἀνεπιτήδευτος Εὐβοεύς, οὐς ὅπιθεν κομόωντας ἐστράτευσεν ἐπὶ Τροίαν ἢ ποίησις; 'I was turned into a Euboean, one of the tribe which the poet marshalled against Troy "with flowing locks behind"').
- 50 On the Abantes, see Strabo, 10.1.3. Note that further on (10.1.8), Strabo mentions Arabs who crossed over with Cadmus to Euboea. Plutarch might be discarding here an ethnographic tradition related to an Arabian presence in the island.
- 51 = 3 Diehl/ Bergk/ Tarditi. On this poem, see Page (1964: 131–2).
- 52 Cf. the explanation in Homeric Scholia (*scholia vetera* = D scholia). Τὰ ὀπίσω μέρη τῆς κεφαλῆς κομῶντες, ἀνδρίας χάριν. Cf. Strabo (10.3.6). The manner of grasping the enemy by the forelock is evidenced, ironically, in one of the Attic depictions of Theseus fighting Procrustes (= Damastes); see Neils (1987: fig. 42 = no. 54).
- 53 Cf. Athenaeus, 13.564f–565a (from Chrysippus, in his treatise *On the Beautiful and on Pleasure*) that the custom of shaving the beard was first introduced in the time of Alexander.
- 54 Cf. *Il.* 3.144, even though this verse could well be interpolated; see Kirk (1985: 282 *ad loc.*).
- 55 Cf. Hdt. 9.73, Diod. 4.63.1–3, Apoll. Rhod. *Ep.* 1.23–24, Hyg. 7.9, Paus. 1.17.5–6, 1.41.4 (= Alcman), 2.22.6–7, 5.19.3. On the abduction of Helen, see Mills (1997: 7–10). See Servadei (2005: 155–60). See that in Attic iconography Helen is depicted as a young woman and Theseus as a beardless youth. Cf. Brommer (1982: 93–7).
- 56 Cf. Pelling (2004) and the habit of Plutarch's heroes to commit the same mistakes.
- 57 Apparently, Hellanicus diminished the importance of the hero's warfare with the Amazons; see Pearson (1942: 19), Walker (1995: 200), in opposition to depictions in which it was stressed, as in Cleidemus (Pearson, 1942: 65–6, 149–52). Note that Polyaen. 1.4 has ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ('in the battles') in his derivative depiction, while Plutarch does not.
- 58 Theseus and the Amazons: see Philochorus (*FGrH* 328 F 110), Perdicas (*FGrH* 3 F 151), Hellanicus (*FGrH* 323a F 16), Herodorus (*FGrH* 31 F 15), Pausanias, 1.2.1. Cf. Appol. *Bibl.* Epit. 1.16. See von Bothmer (1957: chs VIII, X), Brommer (1982: 115–23), Wilde (1999: 12–13), Servadei (2005: 134–41).
- 59 Some stories (especially those involving Helen) reveal Theseus as treacherous, impious and irresponsible. See Mills (1997: 8 and n. 26). Cf. the potential blemish on his character: Isoc. 10.18–22; cf. Diod. 4.63.4. Eur. *Hippol.* veils this problematic character with a plot that marks him as following a predetermined destiny. Cf. Mills (1997: 192–3, 212–14). Some displeasure from Theseus in Greek tragedy presumably

- stems from his unique position as a king in democratic Athens; see Walker (1995: 113–41). Subtle criticism is found in Herodotus' implicit comparison with Deioeces (1.96–8); cf. Thuc. 2.15.2. See Walker (1995: 198) on Thucydides: 'Thucydides does not present Theseus as a champion of enlightenment and progress doing battle against the forces of darkness and backwardness.'
- 60 Cf. Dios. 4.59.2; Apoll. *Bibl.* 4.59–63.
- 61 On the embodiment of the vices of Plutarch's heroes in living creatures, cf. Saïd (2005: 8), Almagor (2009/2010).
- 62 Hallanikus' Theseus is another attempt to reconstruct the hero, probably assigning him more savage features than current Athenian ideology could tolerate. See Pearson (1942: 150).
- 63 Strabo (10.3.6) discusses Euboean warriors and mentions their unique habit of growing long hair at the back, but calls them Curetes (Κουρήτες). Strabo refers both here and in 10.1.12 to the war on the Lelantine plain. Since the passage of Archilochus speaks of a plain (ἐν πεδίῳ), many scholars associate the poem with that war (see Dolan, 1970 and references). On the war itself, dated to the late eighth or early seventh centuries BC, see Burn (1929: 33) and Bradeen (1947: 227). Yet, the original context of Archilochus' poem does not necessarily have to be the Lelantine War (see Page, 1964: 131), and thus the association may originate with Plutarch. Polyaen. 1.4 is derivative and rests on Plutarch.
- 64 Strabo (10.3.6) does not mention Archilochus here, and only quotes Homer.
- 65 See Hall (1997: 23–6, cf. 32–3) on cultural traits as defining ethnicity. Smith (1986: 22–30) includes a shared history among the characteristics of an ethnic group. Cf. mode of life as one of the criteria mentioned in Herodotus (8.144) for ethnic identity.
- 66 See Goušchin (1999, esp. 184n. 44). Cf. Thuc. 2.15.1–2. καθιστάντος presumably echoes Eur. *Suppl.* 351 (καταστήσαι).
- 67 Cf. Pelling (2002: 184–5, 187–8). The political connotation of Theseus' deeds dates back to the archaic and classical period. Cimon in particular promoted the figure of Theseus for propagandistic reasons. For the use of Theseus for political purposes, see Neils (1987: 148–51), Walker (1995: 35–61), Servadei (2005: 202–15). On the 'political myth', see Connor (1970). Plutarch restores Theseus from being an antiquarian interest (cf. Walker 1995: 202) to being the symbol of Athens, or better, of Athenian history.
- 68 Corresponding to the Attidographers' habit of casting Theseus as a later day Athenian, the narrator seems to reflect typical Attic wrangling as the entire discussion is set in a tongue-in-cheek judicial garb (note the ὡς μαρτυρεῖ). See a similar device employed in *Sol.* 19.5, where the reader is left to decide the case. See the near contemporary Dio Chrysostom's *Encomium on Hair* and his use of citations.
- 69 Plutarch uses a similar technique in the *Aratus*. See Almagor (forthcoming (a)). The petty academic squabbles at its beginning reflect the futile conflicts of the Greeks which eventually paved the way for the Macedonians (*Arat.* 49.2). See the pan-Hellenistic sentiment in *Ages.* 15.3 to the effect that the Greeks wasted the lives of generals in internal wars only to leave the triumph over the Persians to Alexander.
- 70 On Pompey's second Colchian campaign, see Dio 37.3–4, Appian, *Mith.* 15.103. See Watkins (1984: 300–2), who argues convincingly that Plutarch's account comes from Teophanes (cf. Strabo, 11.5.1).
- 71 Cf. Appian, *Mith.* 15. 103, who may echo the original source Plutarch used: πολλὰ δὲ ἔν τε τοῖς ὁμήροις καὶ τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις ἠρρέθησαν γυναῖκες, οὐ

μείονα τῶν ἀνδρῶν τραύματα ἔχουσαι· καὶ ἐδόκουν Ἀμαζόνες εἶναι, εἴτε τι ἔθνος ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς γειτονεῦον αἱ Ἀμαζόνες, ἐπὶ κλητοὶ τότε ἐς συμμαχίαν γενόμεναι, εἴτε τινὰς πολεμικὰς ὅλως γυναικας οἱ τῇδε βάρβαροι καλοῦσιν Ἀμαζόνας ('Among the hostages and prisoners many women were found, who had suffered wounds no less than the men. These were supposed to be Amazons, but whether the Amazons are a neighbouring nation that was called to their aid at that time, or whether certain warlike women are called Amazons by the barbarians there, is not known').

- 72 While initially conceived of as residing near the Troad (cf. *Il.* 3.186-9), from the fifth century BC the Amazons were viewed as located in the area of the Thermodon, in what was described as the plain (and later city) of Themiskhyra (Aesch. *PV* 718-28, Hecataeus, *FGH* 1 F 7a, Diod. 2.45-6, Apollon. *Argon.* 2.269-76, Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.5.9, Paus. 1.2.1). See Blok (1975: 69-90, 127, 151-3, 175-6, 275-6). Plutarch probably altered his sources to give a fine twist to the digression, and transformed the Gargarians, as we have it in Strabo (11.5.1-2), to Albanians. Ironically, the latter present thus another substitute, in line with the overall theme of the chapter (below).
- 73 Cf. Watkins (1984: 305): '[the] narrative of the battle leaves much to be desired, since he fails to state the result'.
- 74 Cf. *Pomp.* 53.5 (Caesar as another Pompey).
- 75 Cf. the resemblance of Pompey to Alexander's portrait statue (*Pomp.* 2.1: ὁμοιότητα πρὸς τὰς Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ βασιλέως εἰκόνας), implying this image to be removed twice from reality, in Platonic fashion (cf. *Rep.* 10.598a).
- 76 Cf. *Pomp.* 32.11: 'the Romans came to the attack with the moon at their backs, and since her light was close to the horizon, the shadows made by their bodies were thrown far in advance and fell upon the enemy, who were thus unable to estimate correctly the distance between themselves and their foes' (πεπιεσμένου δὲ περὶ τὰς δύσεις τοῦ φωτός, αἱ σκιαὶ πολὺ τῶν σωμάτων ἔμπροσθεν προϊοῦσαι τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐπέβαλλον, οὐ δυναμένοις τὸ διάστημα συνιδεῖν ἀκριβῶς ἀλλ' ὥς ἐν χερσὶν ἤδη γεγονότων τοὺς ὕσσοις ἀφέντες μάτην οὐδενὸς ἐφίκοντο).
- 77 Sceptical narrator: cf. Pelling (2002: 176); cf. the scepticism in Arrian's *Anab.* 7.13, a digression on the existence of the Amazons.
- 78 The narrator tends to cross this border: cf. *Pomp.* 1.1 on Pompey's father being killed by a thunderbolt.
- 79 Cf. the uncovering of the real Agesilaus as poorer than his image in *Ages.* 36.9, with Shipley (1997: 381-2); cf. Athen. 14.616d. See the imagery of Theater in *Demetrius-Antony*, which hides more than it reveals; cf. Pelling (1988: 21-2).
- 80 Compare the motif of an army drinking an entire river: Hdt. 7.21, 43. Cf. Lateiner (1989: 280n. 15). Unimaginable numbers: e.g. Hdt. 7.40-1 and Dio, 37.4.1 seem to imply that the Romans outnumbered the Albanians. The Herodotean overtone of imperialistic aggressiveness in crossing the river is also not to be missed: cf. Immerwahr (1966: 84 and n. 17, 293); Lateiner (1989: 131-2).
- 81 On allusions to Amazonomachy in imperial times, see the pediment of the Augustan Apollo Temple of C. Sosius and Zanker (1988: 84, 242).
- 82 According to the story, Queen Thalestris approached Alexander with a proposal to produce a progeny. Arrian (7.13.3-6) includes a digression which doubts it. Cf. Bosworth (1981: 1.21n. 15) who calls it an 'antiquarian excursus'; cf. Curt. 6.5.24-32. The story perhaps originated with Cleitarchus (cf. Strabo, 11.5.4). Cf. Plutarch, *Alex.* 46 (πλάσμα). See Baynham (2001). In the *Pompey*, Plutarch thus seems to subvert

the original meaning of Theophanes' account, if he was indeed the source used here. See Watkins (1984: 302n. 1).

- 83 A possible allusion also to the constant flux in the world of images, as Heraclitus is interpreted by Plato (cf. *Crat.* 402a, 439cd; cf. *Theaet.* 182c; cf. *Symp.* 242de and 270d). Heraclitus' famous *dictum* appears in several forms. See Diels F 12 (= Marcovich F 40a = Kahn F L = Arius Didymus fr. 39.2) and Diels D 91 (= Marcovich 40c3 = Kahn LI = Plut. *De E* 392b). Cf. Kirk (1954: 366–84), Marcovich (1967: 194–214), Kahn (1979: 166–9). Cf. Plut. *De sera num.* 559c. On Plutarch and Heraclitus, see Hershbell (1977).
- 84 Cf. Gill (1983: 472–4), Pelling (2002: 308–12, 321–2).

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Ethnography and Authorial Voice in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*

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Athenaeus' fourth book, or how to write an ethnography of dining

For the greatest part of the fourth book of his *Deipnosophistae* (128a–156a) Athenaeus offers us an extraordinary ethnographic account, which stands out in the history of ancient ethnographic writing, for several reasons.¹ The first is its genre: Athenaeus constructs an ethnography of consumption, which describes and compares different communities (Greek and non-Greek) exclusively in terms of their dining and drinking customs. This is not to say that other standard *foci* of ancient ethnographic literature, such as dress, language, political and social organization, political and moral values, are completely absent from Athenaeus' map of cultural difference. Their role, however, is merely peripheral to that of dining habits, the singular focus on which motivates and propels Athenaeus' cross-cultural comparisons. Second, Athenaeus' ethnography pushes the conventions of ancient ethnographic writing to their limits: far from making pretences to originality, it openly flags its derivative character, by meticulously documenting the literary sources from which it has culled a wide range of testimonies on various peoples' consumption habits.² Third, even though the topic was a motif earlier, the comprehensiveness of Athenaeus' ethnography of dining is unparalleled in the surviving corpus of Greek ethnographic writing. The diversity of its source-material (Greek poetic or prose texts, of genres that range from comedy to treatises on *Constitutions*), matching that of the communities it covers, imbues it with an encyclopedic breadth. Athenaeus, however, organizes his material on the basis of (often very unpredictable) associative transitions, and not according to logical criteria of arrangement (geographic, chronological etc.).³

This chapter discusses what sort of map of culinary diversity Athenaeus' vast pool of ethnographic material seeks to draw. More specifically, it explores how Athenaeus' synthetic picture of dining practices across cultures would have interacted with his

audience's established perceptions of other nations (and of themselves in relation to those nations), as well as with their set expectations about the role and function of ethnographic representation itself. I show that it is a text which harbours historiographic ambitions, modelling itself on a Herodotean model of ethnography; and examines the ways in which, far from being a passive bricolage of information, it invites revisions of ethnocentric conceptualizations of the 'self' and 'other'. The aspect of authority is key to all this, and I seek to draw particular attention to the workings of voice and perspective in the text. In particular, I emphasize the element of narratorial control within the text, namely, that Athenaeus carefully steers his readers through the maze of his ethnographic quotations, and discuss the different ways in which Athenaeus' authorial interventions tease different voices out of his sources, and elicit different registers out of his material. Last but not least, I reflect on the role Athenaeus' imperial allegiance plays in shaping his ethnography.

New approaches to modern ethnographic writing draw attention to authorial voice as a key medium of ethnographic representation. Post-modern ethnographers especially have turned to Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism in search of a new, polyphonic model of ethnographic writing – one that de-centres the ethnographer as an agent of 'objective' representation, and foregrounds the dialogue (between representer and the represented) that takes place in the writing of the ethnographic account.⁴ I wish to show that Athenaeus' ethnography presents us with its own model of polyphony. This is not underpinned by a master theory on Athenaeus' part about how ethnography should be written, but is a direct concomitant of Athenaeus' compilatory technique, which embeds different narrative registers and perspectives, and brings Athenaeus' voice into dialogue with the voices of his sources and with the voices that these sources cite.⁵ This interplay of voices often brings to the fore perspectives on the 'other' which stray from conventional schematizations of ethnographic representation, or question their validity.⁶

Finally, my discussion aligns with new groundbreaking studies of ancient Greco-Roman miscellanistic literature, which appraise such texts as intellectually rich projects of knowledge systematization, and, no less significantly, as artful creations, which endorse a distinctly imperial literary aesthetic (that of *variatio*).⁷ A key common feature of imperial miscellanistic texts is their predilection for associative patterns of ordering for their contents.⁸ As we will observe, techniques of association have a key role to play in making Athenaeus' quick succession of ethnographic information readable, but also striking and memorable. This, in turn, serves to trigger various critical responses to his material.

The cosmos of *Deipnosophistae* 4, 128a–156a: Ethnography, identity and empire

At first sight the reader despairs of finding coherence in Athenaeus' meandering sequence of information on dining customs. Table 8.1 below allows an overview of the various topics and communities treated.

Table 8.1 Topics and communities covered by Athenaeus

128a–130d	Hippolochus' <i>Letter to Lynceus</i> : a Macedonian banquet
130e–131a	Two comic poets (Antiphanes and Aristophanes) on Greek banquets, compared with the Persian king's
131a–138b	Attic banquets (with a digression on appetizers (133a–f))
138b–143a	Spartan communal feasts
143a–f	Cretan messes
143f–144b	Comparison of Greek and Persian symposia
144b–d	The luxury of the Persian king's meals
144d–147e	Examples of preparations and expenditures made for luxurious dining
147e–148d	Cleopatra's dinner for Antony
148d–150b	Communal feasts in Arcadia and Naucratis
150b–d	Comparison of Egyptian and Persian dinners
150d–153f	Symposia of other nations: Celts, Thracians, Parthians, Romans, Etruscans, Indians, Germans
153f–154c	Nations which fight duels at their symposia: Campanians, Romans, Etruscans, Celts
154d–155e	Digression on duels and the art of war, with gradual return to the symposium (armour dancing and other sympotic games)
155f–156a	Final conclusion: Plato on the Spartans' frugal dining habits

As we can see, Athenaeus has the characteristic propensity to stitch his ethnographic excerpts together with an associative thread, which means that his sequence of material is subject to very unpredictable shifts of focus, and repetitions of material. The table above marks some of its main digressions (on appetizers, the cost of expensive meals, duels and the art of war), but there are in fact many more, unevenly spread out across this section. Athenaeus' adherence to the aesthetic principle of *poikilia* (or *variatio*) is responsible for this narrative texture, as it dictates the avoidance of thematic uniformity at all costs.⁹

Nevertheless, it is possible to detect a rough division of the material into two main sub-sections: the first (128a–150d) discusses the dining customs of various historical Greek communities, and also draws comparisons between the meagreness of Greek (civic) feasting and the luxury of royal dining, as practised particularly in Macedonia and Persia. The second (150d–156a) is a list of the sympotic customs of various non-Greek peoples. This particular arrangement serves to flag the significance of the categories of 'Greek' and 'non-Greek' for the text, which constitute its conceptual skeleton (rather than geographical space, for example). In addition, it offers Athenaeus the opportunity to make extensive use of the technique of comparison (σύγκρισις) in documenting the diversity of dining customs across communities.¹⁰ Last but not least,

it allows for a sharp focus on stereotypical representations of the (Greek) 'self' and (barbarian) 'other' – and lays the ground open for their revision.

Greeks, barbarians and empires: The ethnographic universe of book four

Greek sympotic habits occupy a lengthy segment of Athenaeus' ethnography of dining. From section 137e to 143f, and from 148f to 150b, Athenaeus brings long fragments from treatises on various Greek cities' *Constitutions* and other historical and philosophical works.¹¹ These passages discuss different traditions of civic dining, both in the historic centres of Hellenism (Athens and Sparta) and also in more marginal areas (Crete, Arcadia, Naucratis). The testimonies collected are for the most part rather pedantic. Lexical details and etymologies abound, as does other grammatical information. The focus seems to fall on recording key elements of local sympotic practice as thoroughly as possible: the location and occasions of local feasting (festival, sacrifice, philosophical activity),¹² the different names for communal feasts (e.g. the Spartan κοπίδες, αἰκλα, and φιδίτια), the different kinds of foods prepared, and the way in which they were distributed and consumed.¹³ The inclusion of Naucratis, Athenaeus' home town, in the list (149d–150b) may in addition flag the key role local knowledge plays.¹⁴ Athenaeus' collection of the Greek cities' dining habits, then, comes suffused with the Second Sophistic's antiquarian spirit, obsessed with local lore, and turning its focus to the cultural backwaters of Hellenism.¹⁵ The trend, exemplified by Plutarch's *Greek Questions*,¹⁶ is underpinned by a conception of Greek identity as inherently fragmented and diffuse – and therefore reliant upon local knowledge and practice in order to be cultivated.¹⁷ Significantly though, the excerpts also stress the role civic dining played in consolidating communal ties within Greek cities, as shown in the participation of the entire community, consisting of rich and poor, young and old, men and women.¹⁸ These passages thus project an idealistic view of the diachronic role equality played in Greek social and political life.

In addition, Athenaeus collects a wealth of information on non-Greek nations' consumption habits (including those of Celts, Thracians, Parthians, Romans, Indians, Germans, Campanians and Etruscans). His material is filtered through Greek eyes, as it has been culled from a variety of Greek historical sources (Phylarchus, Posidonius and Xenophon, among others). This perhaps explains some stereotypical emphases on aspects markedly different from Greek dining tradition: the excessive quantities of meat and wine served, the observance of hierarchy and inequality in the arrangement of the guests and the distribution of food, and the often demeaning treatment of the guests, to whom the barbarian host throws morsels of food as if they were dogs or beggars.¹⁹ Other descriptions graphically evoke the stereotypical image of the barbarian as a brute, lacking self-restraint: thus the Celts, as Posidonius tells us, consume their food 'in a simple, yet lion-like way' (καθαρείως μὲν, λεοντοδῶς δέ, 152a), grabbing it with both hands and biting chunks off. Smaller barbarian peculiarities also emerge, such as the scarcity of oil in their diet (152a), their consumption

of unmixed wine, beer or milk at table (152c, 153e), and their fondness for gladiatorial shows and ritual fighting as sympotic entertainment (153f–154c). The extracts thus illustrate just how powerful an anthropological criterion dining and drinking customs could furnish, classifying nations and communities in terms of their sophistication and refinement.²⁰ Such classifications mattered to Second Sophistic elite intellectuals (who formed Athenaeus' readership), obsessed with matters of 'correct' lifestyle, of which diet was an integral part, and keen to assert their own, Greek-oriented and philosophically-minded style of dining.²¹ This is presumably a key reason why a great range of other Second Sophistic projects concerned with systematizing knowledge shares Athenaeus' interest in ethnography. Plutarch's *Table Talk* enquires into the Persians' custom of deliberating over wine, the Jews' aversion to pork, the Egyptians' veneration of salt, and the Romans' dining customs.²² His *Roman Questions* also collect rich information on Roman sympotic habits, and we can only infer that his now lost *Barbarian Questions* would have included a range of questions on various nations' sympotic usage.²³

But imperial Greco-Roman culture's interest in ethnographic information was above all instigated by the reality of empire itself, its conquest of foreign nations and cosmopolitanism facilitating economic, political and cultural contact between different peoples.²⁴ Indeed, the Roman Empire gives an added dimension to Athenaeus' own assemblage of foreign sympotic customs.²⁵ Athenaeus' imperial cosmopolitanism is articulated very clearly at the beginning of his project, when he praises Rome, the imperial capital, as the 'city of the world' (οἰκουμένης δῆμον), in fact, the very 'epitome of the world' (ἐπιτομήν τῆς οἰκουμένης), a 'heavenly city' (οὐρανόπολιν), in which citizens of all other cities (Alexandria, Antioch, Nicomedia, Athens) have settled, and which members of all other nations (Cappadocian, Scythian, Pontian and others) have made their home (1. *Epit.* 20c). In Athenaeus' world, the union of mankind under the protective shield of the Roman Empire is a reality.²⁶ His ethnography of dining, more than being just a tool for reasserting ethnocentric conceptualizations of the 'self' and 'other', is an expression of exuberance at this imperial world of rich cultural encounters, which triggers a renewed interest in (and a fresh outlook into) Greek diachronic conceptions of cultural similarity and difference.

It is no accident that empires hold a distinct and prominent role in Athenaeus' ethnographic mélange. His catalogue of Greek and foreign dining customs is punctuated, at key points (namely, at the beginning and in the middle), by descriptions of Macedonian, Persian and Egyptian royal symposia (128a–130d, 143f–146d, 147e–148d, 150b–d, respectively).²⁷ These evoke each other in a way that prompts us to view them as parallel examples of a particular style of dining, namely, imperial, distinct from both the austerity of Greek civic feasting and the boorishness of barbarian tribal dining. Its main features are the abundance of food and drink, the luxurious preparations and the mobilization of a vast network of human and other material resources for the purpose of satisfying the ruler. Royal dinners may of course also border on the excessive, as far as both preparations for the meal and the number of guests are concerned. Athenaeus even gives figures on the vast expenditure that tends to incur from such lavish dining: as we learn, Alexander the Great and the Persian king paid roughly equal amounts (about 400 talents – the figure is given in both minae,

talents and denarii) in order to entertain their guests (146c–d). Cleopatra spent one talent (which is by itself a very large amount) just in order to strew the floor of her dining room with roses (148b)!²⁸ And yet this excess is moderated by the fact that such dinners also offer the opportunity for the display of unparalleled magnanimity and generosity. For Athenaeus, then, imperial dining offers the space for reflecting on the best of what the barbarians offered to the world. Furthermore, it is significant in the context of the Greeks' encounters with barbarians across history. For the Greeks' repeated contacts with empires brought enrichment to their culinary traditions, but also, more crucially, resulted in their more positive regard for pleasure and good life. Imperial Greco-Roman sympotic literature (of which the *Deipnosophistae* is an integral part), with its lively scenes of leisurely dining, vividly illustrates the change.

Herodoteanism in the fourth book

Athenaeus' ethnographic compilation aligns itself with the Herodotean paradigm of ethnography. This is not a matter of mere stylistic imitation (in tune nevertheless with a wider penchant for Herodotean *mimesis* among Second Sophistic authors)²⁹ but a gesture that flags Athenaeus' close engagement with a long tradition of Greek ethnographic and anthropological discourse decisively shaped by Herodotus. It is thus notable that the ethnography of book four is strategically placed at the beginning of a lengthy excursus, spanning three books, on what we might broadly term 'styles of consumption'. These embrace nations, philosophical schools, kings and other prominent individuals, and include information on key ingredients in the colourful social mosaic of the ancient symposium (parasites, flatterers and slaves). Their placement and scope show the features that make the *Deipnosophistae* something more than just an exhaustive compilation of citations about dining and drinking: its anthropological value. Athenaeus is conscious of the fact that the information he has culled from a vast literary record yields a colourful map of human behavioural and cultural variation. Virtually his entire material affords opportunities for some kind of cultural, political and moral evaluation, but clustering the anthropologically-significant information in this way (with ethnography at the head) is a key means of drawing attention to this potential.³⁰ This is reminiscent of Herodotus, whose ethnographic 'digressions' (as they tend to be called),³¹ especially in his masterful ethnographies of Egypt and Scythia (books two and four, respectively) similarly flag the significance of anthropological insight for the *Histories*. They turn Herodotus' project into 'a collection of empirical data that lets Herodotus and his (contemporary as well as future) audience examine both the variety and the constant traits of human behaviour'.³²

Moreover, Athenaeus seems to be casting himself in the mould of Herodotus the traveller-ethnographer, who recounts the story of his adventurous enquiry into other nations' customs. In the course of Athenaeus' ethnography, the voice of its compiler (Athenaeus, in his role as the extra-diegetic narrator of his text) intrudes with much greater regularity than is standard in the *Deipnosophistae*. For one thing, in the fourth book, external narration occupies a much longer segment of the text's opening than usual.³³ It is only when we get to 134d that Athenaeus' voice recedes, handing the

narrative over to the voice of one of his fictional characters, Plutarch of Alexandria: 'The parodist Matro describes an Attic dinner in a rather charming fashion. I would not be reluctant to recite it to you, my friends,' Plutarch said, 'because of its rarity.'³⁴ This fact further underlines the centrality of the cross-cultural investigation of consumption to the *Deipnosophistae* as a whole.³⁵ Equally remarkable is the fact that the compiler's interventions are frequent throughout the section, and instrumental in conceptually framing the material and effecting transitions. This, however, enhances our impression that this is a carefully as much as a laboriously constructed narrative; its narrator is constantly at work attempting to spin a continuous narrative thread out of many heterogeneous testimonies. Thus, through the intrusion of his voice, Athenaeus draws attention to the intricate tapestry of his material and dissonant voices within it, warning his readers against easy, sweeping interpretations. Again, Herodotus the 'master raconteur'³⁶ furnishes a key paradigm, as he too underscores his text's complexity through his frequent authorial interventions. These are aimed to offer a helping hand through the maze of the *Histories*' vast source-material, but, equally frequently, they cast doubt on the validity or reliability of what is testified, urging the reader to form his or her own judgement.³⁷

Athenaeus' Herodotean self-fashioning acquires more substance if we also consider it as part of a wider set of 'Herodoteanizing' gestures, through which the *Deipnosophistae* signals its ambition to pose as a comprehensive *historical record* of sympotic consumption; it is a text written in the commemorative spirit of Herodotus' *Histories*, 'so that human acts may not be erased by time'.³⁸ They take the form of a persistent concern with the origins of the *deipnon*-symposion (which book one traces back to Homer), emulating Herodotus' tracing of the war between Greece and Persia back to Homer.³⁹ They also involve the desire to chart sympotic practice within a wide temporal and spatial framework,⁴⁰ following the example of Herodotus' embedding of different conceptualizations of space in his text.⁴¹ Furthermore, Athenaeus' interest in empires mirrors Herodotus' preoccupation with the fates of empires (Lydian, Egyptian, Persian) and the complexity of their relationships to the Greek world.⁴²

But Athenaeus' ethnographic persona in book four is also meant to prompt reflection on some key asymmetries in relation to Herodotus: the shift from Herodotus the first-person observer and eyewitness to Athenaeus the first-person scholar-compiler reflects the dramatic shift in the historical and intellectual conditions that set the two authors apart: Athenaeus, living and writing in the period of the Roman Empire (in the era of Septimius Severus) is the inheritor and manager of a vast archive of ethnographic knowledge, accumulated in the course of centuries of Greek writing about 'others'. Like Herodotus, he too is a traveller, but of a different, virtual kind: a navigator, as Wilkins has aptly noted, in a vast sea of ethnographic quotations that he has culled from the library.⁴³ Like Herodotus, he too is a first-hand witness to an extraordinary diversity of cross-cultural encounters – though not as a result of a journey to foreign lands, but merely as a concomitant of his living and writing in Rome, the city which all nations and all cities have made their home (*Deipn.* 1. *Epit.* 20b–c).⁴⁴

Athenaeus affirms his predominantly scholarly attitude to his ethnographic material when, twice in the ethnographic section of the fourth book, he justifies his

inclusion of atypically long fragments containing ethnographic information on dining on grounds of rare provenance. At the very beginning, he tells us that he cites at length Hippolochus' epistle to Lynceus, describing a Macedonian dinner, 'because it is rarely found' (ἐπεὶ ... σπανίως εὕρσκεται, 128c); and, later on, he (Plutarch) quotes a lengthy fragment from the epic parodist Matro of Pitane, describing an Attic dinner (fr. 1 Olson-Sens), 'because of its rarity' (διὰ τὸ σπάνιον, 134d). Athenaeus' desire is to memorialize a wider legacy of Greek writing about the ethnographic and anthropological value of food. The decisions he makes as a scholar-compiler are crucial to the transmission and reception of this legacy. It is this function that, as we will see, underpins his authorial presences (and also silences) in the fourth book.⁴⁵

Greek poverty and barbarian luxury reconsidered

The contrast between luxury and poverty forms an important lens through which Athenaeus views and compares different nations' sympotic customs. This approach had a long pedigree: Greek cultural imagination tended to idealize Greek banqueting practice, which was thought to be underpinned by simplicity and frugality in the consumption of food and drink, and by civility, order and equality on the social level. Foreign nations' symposia provided were contrasted to this model, and were stereotypically thought of as lacking orderliness, self-restraint and equality.⁴⁶ The contrast's defining moment came with Herodotus' *Histories*, whose account of the Persian Wars established Persia as the symbol of barbarian corruption par excellence.⁴⁷ Not accidentally, he features centrally among the many historical authors that are cited in the main ethnographic section of book four.⁴⁸ Athenaeus himself acknowledges the example Persia set in his twelfth book, where he says that 'The first among men to become notorious for their luxurious lifestyle [τροπή] were the Persians' (513e-f).⁴⁹

From its very beginning, the fourth book urges an alternative view of this stereotypical contrast's terms. The book begins with an epistle, written by the Macedonian Hippolochus and addressed to his friend Lynceus, a Samian comedian and acolyte of Theophrastus.⁵⁰ The epistle, part of a series of 'dinner-party letters' (δειπνητικαὶ ἐπιστολαί, 128a) exchanged between the two men, describes the wedding feast of a Macedonian nobleman, Caranus, in which Hippolochus participated as a guest.⁵¹ The letter describes a banquet of dazzling abundance: exquisite food and drink is served, and valuable objects are offered to the guests as presents; and entertainment of all kinds beguiles the senses. The narrative is vivid, and invites the reader to imagine the full spectrum of pleasures enjoyed at the Macedonian dinner.

But the narrative also prompts the reader to reflect on the dangers of such material excess, by showing how the dinner destroys sociability: the excessively drunken guests, as we read, spend their evening trying to snatch as much of the wealth on offer as possible – but they leave the wedding-feast sober, because of their fear for the wealth that they received (130d). All the elements of a typical anti-banquet scene are thus in place. As Luciana Romeri has pointed out, the materialistic symposium, characterized by an exclusive emphasis on the enjoyments of food and drink, and the idealized symposium of words (λόγοι), which privileges the intellectual aspect of sympotic

interaction, stand at opposite ends in the spectrum of Greek sympotic values.⁵² For the reader, the materialism of Caranus' dinner-party is probably no surprise: the excesses of the Macedonian court were well known, exemplified by Alexander the Great's perverse behaviour at table.⁵³ Yet Hippolochus' concluding apostrophe to his addressee redirects the reader to a positive appraisal of this luxury, by comparing it with the meagreness of Athenian lifestyle (130d):

You however just stay in Athens [σὺ δὲ μόνον ἐν Ἀθήναις μένων] and call yourself happy [εὐδαιμονίζεις] because you listen to Theophrastus' theses [τὰς Θεοφράστου θέσεις ἀκούων], and eat thyme, rocket, and your fine twist-bread, and attend the festivals of Lenaia and Chytroi. We on the other hand, who were feasted on riches from Caranus' dinner, rather than on portions of food [ἡμεῖς δ' ἐκ τοῦ Καράνου δείπνου πλοῦτον ἀντὶ μερίδων εὐωχηθέντες], are now looking to buy houses, land, or slaves [νῦν ζητοῦμεν οἱ μὲν οἰκίας, οἱ δὲ ἀγρούς, οἱ δὲ ἀνδράποδ' ὠνήσασθαι].

This is a striking statement, although not unexpected of someone like Hippolochus. But Athenaeus' words which follow align with and reinforce Hippolochus' dismissive tone, by replicating its rhetorical format, comparative tone and register (scornful mockery) (130e):

When you consider this, my friend Timocrates [εἰς ταῦτα, ὦ ἑταῖρε Τιμόκρατες, ἀποβλέπων], with which Greek dinner could you compare the symposium just described [τίνι συγκρίναι ἔχεις τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δείπνων τὸ προκείμενον τοῦτο συμπόσιον;]?

This rhetorical question, then, triggers a string of quotations from poetic (mostly comic) texts, which ridicule Greek diet (130e–f), and Athenian dining habits in particular (130f–134d). The choice of genre is strategic, given the centrality of the discourse on food in ancient comedy, and comedy's ambivalent stance on luxury and gluttony.⁵⁴ The first comic fragment, from Antiphanes (fr. 170), compares the deficiency of the Greek diet⁵⁵ with the abundance of meats at the Great King's dinners. The second, from Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 85–9), describes the response which the magnificence (μεγαλειότητα, 130f) of the Great Persian King's hospitality elicits from the Greek ambassadors: stupefaction and awe. Together, the citations introduce Persia, side-by-side with Macedonia, as a foil of the Greek paradigm of dining. By doing so, they also highlight the precariousness of Greek frugality as a lifestyle ideal, given the Greeks' exposure to alternative models of dining.⁵⁶ The remaining fragments provide lists of the usual foodstuffs served at Athenian symposia (mostly breads and vegetables, or small fish and birds, thus confirming Hippolochus' dismissive summary). They stress, finally, that this is the kind of nutrition that leaves a guest hungry (132b), and which should be better thought of as a diet of starters (132c, and 133a–f).⁵⁷ All in all, the comic quotations serve to further amplify the mocking tone of Athenaeus (and Hippolochus): their mocking register is underscored by the voice of the narrator, who introduces them with verbs such as διασύρειν ('to ridicule') (131a) and διαπαίζειν ('to playfully mock') (130e, 131f). They also show that the Greek literary tradition itself does not speak with one voice on the matter of Greek

frugality; on the contrary, there is plenty to cull from sources questioning its cultural credentials.⁵⁸

This alternative 'reading' of Greek poverty is effected through a synergy of techniques. The cumulative nature of Athenaeus' text, which endows it with a polyphonic quality, allows for alternative standpoints (the Macedonian, the comic) and registers (mockery, ridicule, scorn) to come to the fore. But Athenaeus' own voice plays the most crucial part. Seen superficially, the mockery of Greek frugality *appears* to be an almost accidental concomitant of the extremely economical way Athenaeus has devised in order to propel his ethnographic narrative: his scholar-compiler's voice is there in order to highlight (more or less subtly) a strand of thought, or a certain tone, in a given citation, which can then be explored exhaustively by accumulating more and more relevant material (in this instance, of comic provenance).⁵⁹ But this is to underplay the element of (subjective) choice that underpins the process. By harmonizing his voice with that of Hippolochus, and by drawing attention to the derisive tone of his comic fragments, Athenaeus signals to his readers that he *wants* them to focus on the mockery – and to reflect, on the basis of what follows, whether, given the availability of such great culinary refinements elsewhere, Greek dietary meagreness does not indeed deserve scorn. This is why he completely sidesteps the anti-banquet elements of Hippolochus' letter, an emphasis which would probably have led to a very different string of quotations, presumably stressing the advantages of Greek poverty.

Athenaeus reintroduces the comparison between Greek poverty and barbarian luxury towards the middle of the section. The comparison interrupts a thread of quotations on various Greek civic dining customs; and frames a set of quotations on the Persian king's luxurious banquets. One would think of its placement as strategic, for the reader is meant to compare the Athenian, Spartan and Cretan traditions of communal feasting that have preceded (137e–143f) and, pre-emptively, also the ones of Arcadia and Naucratis that will follow, with Persian royal banquets (144b–146a). This is the kind of comparison that is bound to prompt reflection not only on the differences of the respective culinary traditions, but – more importantly – also on the differences in social and cultural institution and organization that underpin them. And yet once again, the narrative redirects us to the mockery of Greek poverty, urging us, once again, to think 'outside the box' of stereotypical representation. This time the mockery bears Herodotus' stamp of authority: 'Herodotus, comparing [συγκρίνων, 143f] the Greeks' symposia with those of the Persians, says ...', Athenaeus begins, and then goes on to cite *Histories* 1.133, which describes Persian dining customs (feasts offered at birthdays, and the custom of deliberating on serious affairs over wine).⁶⁰ Crucially, Herodotus' account also preserves the Persian perspective on Greek dining habits: '[t]he Persians say⁶¹ that the Greeks stop their eating when they are still hungry [σιτεομένους πεινώντας παύεσθαι], as nothing worthwhile is served to them after dinner [ὅτι σφίσιν ἀπὸ δείπνου παραφορέται οὐδὲν ἄξιον λόγου]. But if anything worthwhile *were* indeed to be served [εἰ δέ τι παραφέροιτο], they would *not* stop eating [ἐσθίοντας ἂν οὐ παύεσθαι]' (144a).⁶² Herodotus' use of the less probable future condition mockingly dispels any rosy idealizations of Greek poverty: the Greeks are only frugal by necessity!

After the quotations that follow draw for the reader a vivid picture of the luxury of Persian royal dinners,⁶³ we have Herodotus again, glossing the earlier Herodotus: a summary of *Histories* 7.118-20 (146a-b) allows a substantiation of the comparison between Greek poverty and Persian luxury, with a set of economic facts: the Greek cities that entertained Xerxes suffered grave economic damage (Antipater of Thasos spent 400 talents of silver for the king's meal); the preparations for the king's meals were immense and included gold and silver objects; indeed, 'if Xerxes had had dinner twice [εἰ δὲ Ξέρξης δις ἐσπέετο] by taking breakfast as well, the cities would have been devastated [ἀνάστατοι ἂν ἐγγέγονεσαν αἱ πόλεις]' (146b).⁶⁴ The scenario may be hyperbolic (as the unreal condition stresses), yet it is striking enough. Athenaeus here is accurately capturing Herodotus' message: no Greek city, however wealthy, could ever have the financial resources needed in order to organize banquets of the scale customary in the Persian court. Fine dining is (has always been, as the father of history reminds Athenaeus' readers) an imperial affair.

Not only that, but, after a short digression on the nature and cost of expensive dining, and a description of Cleopatra's feast for Antony,⁶⁵ Athenaeus, through the figure of the banqueter Plutarch reasserts Herodotus' message in his own words (just as he did in the case of Hippolochus' letter): 'When we consider these things [Εἰς ταῦτα ... ἀποβλέποντας], which are beyond our own means [τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς], we may be content with Greek poverty [ἀγαπᾶν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν πενίαν], taking into view [λαμβάνοντας πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν] also the Thebans' dinner parties which Cleitarchus describes in ...' (148d). The verb ἀγαπᾶν ('to be contented with', but also 'to put up with', to tolerate')⁶⁶ stresses, once again, the relentless necessity of Greek poverty. 'Plutarch' is saying in effect that 'We' the Greeks will just have to accept Greek poverty, by looking in two directions (note the parallel expressions ἀποβλέποντας, λαμβάνοντας πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν): things that are beyond them (imperial dining), and things closer to home (the Theban story that follows, 148d-f). The core point of the Theban story is the Thebans' μικροψυχία ('meanness of spirit', 'pettiness').⁶⁷ they possessed wealth of 440 talents (Athenaeus has allowed us to gauge the value of the sum through his earlier references to the costs of elaborate dinners, 146a-e), and yet they used none of it in order to improve their lifestyle and poor diet, consisting of the kinds of nibbles that we have already seen in the case of Athens. 'With such food,' the narrator comments, 'Attaginus the son of Phrynon feasted Mardonius and the other fifty Persians – this is the same one about whom Herodotus [9.16] claims that he made grand preparations. And I think that if they [i.e. the Persians] had already perished by such food [ἀπολωλόσιν ἤδη ὑπὸ τοιούτων τροφῶν] they [of course] could not have won [οὐκ ἂν περιεγέγοντο], and that the Greeks would [probably] not even have needed [οὐδ' ἂν ἐδέησε] to draw up their troops [against them] at Plataea' (148e-f).⁶⁸ In a striking conclusion to the theme of Greek poverty, the narrator again invokes Herodotus – only in order to disprove him.⁶⁹ Attaginus' dinner for Mardonius prior to the Battle of Plataea may have been elaborate, but only to the extent that the oligarch's Theban μικροψυχία would have allowed; malnourished, the Persians could not have withstood the battle – indeed, they probably perished before it even began. With this strikingly absurd hypothesis expressed through unreal conditions, the narrator confirms his revisionist stance on Greek received wisdom about poverty

and luxury. His departure culminates with revision of Herodotus himself: Herodotus was right, Athenaeus tells us, about the role the Greeks' austerity and frugality played in their victory at Plataea. But he got one crucial detail wrong: diet was important not because it benefited the Greeks, but, rather, because it harmed the Persians – who, on the night before, had been so badly fed on what was probably the worst of Greek food. With this provocative suggestion comes a more fundamental point: diet and sympotic customs matter not as static cultural attributes, but, more significantly, because they could shape, or might indeed have shaped, history in a real and tangible way. By helping to illuminate their function in history, Athenaeus' ethnography of dining yields fresh insights into the past, but also useful lessons for the present and future.

Yet more intriguingly, the comparative mood and polyphony of Athenaeus' text serve to relativize poverty and luxury. For one thing, the diachronic ubiquity of poverty across the Greek world is problematized as the text shows that, in fact, Greek cities differed greatly in terms of their culinary refinement, and that the Greeks themselves were aware of such differences, and often commented on them. Thus, a parasite called Dromeas claimed that symposia at the city of Chalkis far surpassed those of Athens – the latter served meals that are better characterized as 'proems to the dinner' (προοίμιον ... δείπνου, 132c). The Thessalians too, we learn later, would never be satisfied with an Attic dinner, their food being much better at home (137d). Cooks explain that their guests' palates differ, depending on the Greek culinary tradition that they represent (132d–f). A Sybarite attributed Spartan bravery to despair (who would want to live, being fed like that? 138d), his sentiment anticipating 148e–f, about Greek bravery at Plataea.⁷⁰ Barbarian luxury is also a matter of perspective, as we learn. The section on Spartan banqueting styles begins as mentioned with the Herodotean story (9.82) on how the Spartan general Pausanias made Mardonius' cooks prepare for him a meal typical of what they cooked for their master. He displayed this meal to the Greek generals, next to one his own Spartan cooks prepared, in order to show them the folly (ἄφροσύνην) of the Persian ruler, who, despite his rich lifestyle (τοιαύτην διαίταν ἔχων), decided to attack them, even though they were in such a miserable state (οὕτω ταλαίπωρον ἔχοντας) (138b–d). Later in the text its mirror-story appears: an anecdote from the historian Lyceas (*FGrH* 613 F 4) describes how the Persian king Ochus sampled the kind of banquet typically prepared for the Egyptian king, and exclaimed: 'may the gods bring you to a bad end, Egyptian, since you abandoned dinners of this kind [δείπνα τοιαύτα καταλιπών] and coveted cheaper meals [ἐπεθύμησας θοίνης εὐτελεστέρας]' (150b–d). Even the great meals of the Persian king pale before those of his foe, the Egyptian king. Persian dining only appears extravagant when judged by people such as the Spartans, famous for their life of extreme deprivation. And yet, as Athenaeus informs us at the closure of his section on Sparta, even the Spartans ended up changing their austere ways:

Later, the Spartans brought the harshness of such a lifestyle to an end [τὴν δὲ τῆς διαίτης τῆς τοιαύτης σκληρότητα ὕστερον καταλύσαντες οἱ Λάκωνες], and drifted into luxury [ἐξώκειλαν εἰς τρυφήν] (141f.).

Poverty and luxury have no stable referents, for the simple reason that nations tend to change their ways over time.⁷¹ The vast cumulative space of the *Deipnosophistae*

allows documentation of this change, by assembling and collating testimonies from different times and mindsets. This function further affirms the historical dimension of Athenaeus' ethnography, and its value for understanding human nature in all its intricate variety and diversity.

Conclusion

Athenaeus' ethnography of the symposium is a landmark in the history of ancient culture's diachronic interest in food as a marker of collective character. Athenaeus offers his readers an informative collage of ethnographic testimonies, culled from the vast archive of Greek literary tradition. These do not build a static picture of cultural difference seen through the lens of food consumption, however, nor do they blindly reproduce old ethnographic stereotypes. More dynamically, they reframe the terms of Greek ethnographic representation, departing from ethnocentric perceptions of the self and other, and offering revisions of some of its standard *topoi*. The rich legacy of Greek ethnographic writing matters, Athenaeus says to his readers – but it has to be seen with fresh, imperial eyes.

Accordingly, in the *Deipnosophistae*, old schematic contrasts between Greek poverty and barbarian wealth, Greek moderation and barbarian excess, Greek equality and barbarian inequality are thought of afresh, or signified in new ways. The underlying motives are clear: ethnocentric conceptions of Greekness are somewhat mitigated by Athenaeus' cosmopolitan imperial context; and, further, material abundance, luxury and pleasure have positive connotations in his world, as markers of imperial prosperity. He and his peers, as Greek intellectuals enjoying the advantages of Roman patronage, personally benefited from such luxury and abundance, as guests at the *symposia* of their rich Roman patron, Larensis, the dedicatee of the *Deipnosophistae* (*Deipn.* 1.*Epit.* 1a–e).⁷²

As we have seen, Athenaeus' revisionist outlook materializes through specific literary techniques: comparison (σύγκρισις) and analogy, generic imitation, an extremely subtle manipulation of the effects of voice and perspective, and a clever control over order and placement. But above all, it is communicated through explicit commentary on the part of the narrator-compiler, Athenaeus himself in his role as extra-diegetic author, or the intra-diegetic character who takes up the narrative from Athenaeus, the grammarian Plutarch of Alexandria. These techniques merit systematic examination, as key tools through which Athenaeus actively converses with the ethnographic legacy that he is set ostensibly to be merely reproducing. By focusing on them, we are able to gauge not only his literary skill, but, more crucially, his intellectual ambitions and gravitas.

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank the audiences at the Universities of St Andrews and Lampeter, to whom an early version of this chapter was presented as a seminar paper.

Warm thanks should also go to Eran Almagor and Joseph Skinner, for their work as organizers of the panel 'Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches' at the 2010 Classical Association Conference, where this chapter's precursor was presented. All translations from the *Deipnosophistae* are my own (but Olson's translation was consulted throughout).

- 2 On this 'bibliographical order' that directs the *Deipn.* as a whole, see Jacob (2004). Cf. Diodorus, 1–5 (also derivative, but the material is integrated into a coherent narrative). On Diodorus' compilatory method, see Ambaglio (1995).
- 3 Topography was a standard means of organizing geographical and ethnographic material in the ancient world. See Thomas (2000: 75–101) on Herodotus; Clarke (1999: 77–128, 191–244) on Polybius and Strabo; Murphy (2004: 165–91) on Pliny the Elder; Hutton (2007: 54–174) on Pausanias. Chronology would also have been possible to Athenaeus, given that his material spans texts from many different centuries of Greek ethnographic writing. Chronology would have enabled him to produce a 'history of consumption across cultures and eras'. On time in ancient geographical and historiographic writing, see Clarke (1999: 245–93); de Jong and Nünlist (2007: 115–81).
- 4 See Barfield (1997: 121 *s.v.* Bakhtinian discourse theory); and Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 203–6). On Bakhtinian dialogism, see Bakhtin (1981).
- 5 On this, see Jacob (2001; 2004: 135–6). On voice in ancient Greco-Roman technical and compilatory literature, see Taub and Doody (2009); König (2011).
- 6 Scholarship has long stressed the conventional nature of ancient ethnographic representation. See Hartog (1988) on the inversions and symmetries on which Herodotus' text relies. For objections to Hartog's schematic approach, see Thomas (2000: 42–134). See also Sassi (2001: 82–139) and Murphy (2004: 77–128). See also the introduction, and Vlassopoulos, this volume.
- 7 See Murphy (2004: 30–40); König and Whitmarsh (2007: 27–39).
- 8 As Pelling (2000: 171–5) has shown, association is far from random, but a carefully premeditated device, which carries its own sub-texts.
- 9 See nn. 7–8.
- 10 Σύγκρισις has been mainly studied in Plutarch. See Swain (1992); Duff (1999: 243–86); and Duff (2000).
- 11 On Athenaeus' citations of works on *Constitutions*, see Bollansée (2007).
- 12 Dinners at the Lyceum and Academy, 137f. Cf. Plut., QC 6. *Praef.* (686A–D).
- 13 See detailed analysis by Schmitt-Pantel (1992).
- 14 Athenaeus is citing Hermeias' *On the Gryneian Apollo*, possibly indicating access to a non-mainstream, local source.
- 15 See Whitmarsh (2010) and Oikonomopoulou (forthcoming b).
- 16 The similarities are telling. The QG also (probably) relies on works on *Constitutions* (see Halliday 1928: 14–15); and also cites 'inside' knowledge on Delphi and Boeotia (see, e.g. *quaestiones* 9, 12, 38). See Preston (2001) and Oikonomopoulou (forthcoming b). However, the work does not offer information on Greek dining customs.
- 17 See König (2007: 62–8); and Whitmarsh (2010).
- 18 Especially in the case of Sparta: 138e–141f.
- 19 Note especially Phylarchus' and Xenophon's descriptions of the dining customs of Celts and Thracians, respectively (150d–151e), and cf. the Parthians in 152ff.
- 20 See Garnsey (1999: 62–81). On Posidonius in the *Deipn.*, see Clarke (2007). Also Kidd (1988).

- 21 This is related to the phenomenon of the 'care of the self': see Van Hoof (2010: 35–7, 211–54) on Plutarch's *Precepts of Health Care*.
- 22 QC. Dining customs of the Jews: 4.4 (669C)–4.5; Egyptians: 4.5, 5.10, 8.8 (729A); Persians: 7.4 (703E), 7.8 (713E)–7.9; Romans: 1.3, 4.4 (668B–C), 5.3 (676C), 7.4, 7.6 (726E–727A). On barbarians in Plutarch generally, see Schmidt (1999; 2000; 2002; and 2004); and Nikolaidis (1986). On ethnographic digressions in the *Lives*, see Almagor, this volume.
- 23 See QR 33, 45, 64, 80, 85, 89, 109–10. On the *Quaest. Barb.*, see Harrison (2000: 194–7) and Schmidt (2008).
- 24 See Murphy (2004: 77–128); Woolf (2011: esp. 59–88).
- 25 On this, see also Braund (2000) and Wilkins (2008).
- 26 On imperial cosmopolitan traditions, see Konstan (2009). See Edwards and Woolf (2003: 1–20), and Richter (2011: 135–242).
- 27 On Greek perceptions of the Macedonians, see Sourvinou-Inwood (2002).
- 28 Cf. 146a: Antipater spent 400 talents in order to entertain the Persian king – which is about the same amount. 146d ff. further helps to conceive of the figure's magnitude, explaining that the usual cost of a large meal is one talent.
- 29 See Hutton (2005: 190–213).
- 30 Cf. book twelve, which reasserts this focus.
- 31 On doubts about whether they are actually digressions, see Harrison (1998: 48–51). On the centrality of foreign lands to Herodotus' project, see Rood (2007: 290).
- 32 Rood (2007: 291). On Herodotus' ethnographic sections, see Redfield (1985); Hartog (1988); Pelling (1997); Thomas (2000); Munson (2001); Lloyd (2002); West (2002); and Karttunen (2002).
- 33 As we know, the alternation of external narration with internal dialogue is a key aspect of the *Deipnosophistae's* experimentation with different narrative registers. See Guillén (2000: 250–4) and Maisonneuve (2007), who chart this throughout the books. Both, however, show that Athenaeus' voice usually only features at the beginning and closure of each book. In the former instances, its role is to offer an elegant (though brief) preamble to the internal dialogue of the *deipnosophists*. See also Jacob (2004: 150–8).
- 34 The remainder of the section is a monologue by Plutarch. Guillén (2000: 253) calls this transition 'careless.' Cf. the letter of Hippolochus to Lynceus, which begins as a narration by Athenaeus himself (128a), but soon (128d ff.) the narrative switches to Hippolochus.
- 35 A key parallel is provided by book 12, on luxury (wholly narrated by Athenaeus the extra-diegetic narrator. See Guillén (2000: 252) and Maisonneuve (2007: 405–6).
- 36 Dewald (1987: 149).
- 37 On Herodotus' unreliability as the narrator of his text, and the active response expected of his readers, see Baragwanath (2008: 6–34).
- 38 ὥς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, Hdt. *Hist.* 1 (*Praef.*).
- 39 See *Deipn.* 1. (*Epit.*) 8e–18b, with Heath (2000), Bréchet (2007). On Homer and Herodotus, see Boedeker (2002), Marincola (2007) and Baragwanath (2008: 35–54).
- 40 Wilkins (2008).
- 41 See Barker et al. (2010).
- 42 See Flower (2007), Forsdyke (2001; 2007), Ward (2008) and Raaflaub (1987).
- 43 Wilkins (2008).
- 44 Cf. Aelius Aristides' *Or.* 26.10, with Edwards and Woolf (2003).

- 45 On Athenaeus the scholar, see Thompson (2000) and Jacob (2000; 2001; 2004).
- 46 See Garnsey (1999: 62–81); Schmidt (1999; 2000; 2002; 2004); Wilkins (2001).
- 47 See Pelling (1997); Thomas (2000: 106–14); Flower (2007). See the Introduction to this volume.
- 48 On Athenaeus' historical citations generally, see Zecchini (1989) and Lenfant (2007a).
- 49 On representations of the luxury Persian royal dining practice by Greek sources, see Briant (2002: 286–97).
- 50 On Lynceus, see *Brill's New Pauly* s.v.; and Dalby (2000).
- 51 'Macedonian king' according to *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. gastronomy.
- 52 Romeri (2000; 2002).
- 53 See Plut. *Alex.* 50–1, 52–4, 70.1–2. Cf. QC 1.6, and 9.1.736F–737A. See Oikonomopoulou (forthcoming a).
- 54 On the topic, see Wilkins (2001). On comedy in Athenaeus, see Sidwell (2000) and Wilkins (2000).
- 55 Note the adjectives μικροτράπεζοι, 'small-tabled', and φυλλοτρῶγες, 'leaf-eaters', referring to the Greeks.
- 56 This will become especially poignant in the case of Sparta later. See 138d–f; 139b; 139f–140a; 140e.
- 57 The digression on starters is thus apposite, because it helps to illustrate just how insufficient Athenian diet is: it whets the appetite, rather than satisfying it. Cf. *Deipn.* 1–3, where starters are treated at length (thus inviting the reader to make further comparisons).
- 58 The comic register also intrudes in the section on Spartan dining. See 138e–f; 139b; 139f–140a; 140e.
- 59 See Jacob (2001).
- 60 Cf. Plut. QC 7.8–9.
- 61 Athenaeus' citation replicates the original of Herodotus' report almost verbatim. On Athenaeus' Herodotean citations, see Pelling (2000) and Lenfant (2007b).
- 62 Italics are mine, but following Olson (2006: Vol. 2, 189).
- 63 Cf. *Deipn.* 12.513e–515d, on the same topic.
- 64 In fact, he is rendering the condensed gist of two different stories in Herodotus about Greek cities which feasted Xerxes (Thasos and Abdera).
- 65 Cf. Plut. *Ant.* 26–8, with Brenk (1992: 4391–402) and Oikonomopoulou (forthcoming a).
- 66 See LSJ s.v. Olson's translation is 'appreciate', which I believe does not adequately render its compromising tone.
- 67 See LSJ s.v. Contrast the Persian's king's μεγαλειότης, in 130ff, and the references to Macedonian and Persian generosity that have preceded.
- 68 The syntax is elliptical, hence the free translation (with supplementations of meaning). The dative ἀπολώλασιν seems to rely on an implied dative from παρατάττεσθαι (see LSJ, s.v.) Cf. Olson's translation of the same passage, relying on the same presumption (2006: Vol. 2, 213).
- 69 Battle of Plataea in the Hdt. 9.25–76.
- 70 A more elaborate version of the anecdote can be found in *Deipn.* 12.518d–e.
- 71 Cf. the Herodotean dipole of νόμος-φύσις, on which see Thomas (2000: 102–34).
- 72 See Braund (2000). This should come, once again, with a word of caution: we are reliant on the epitome's rendering of Athenaeus' opening sections. Thus, we are unable to tell to what extent he fully aligned with the imperial perspective. Any potential ironic distancing in his voice is lost.

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Part 4

Receptions

Imperial Visions, Imagined Pasts: Ethnography and Identity on India's North-Western Frontier

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Discussion of the various ways in which the ethnographic and geographical enquiries of Greek and Roman authors were subsequently 'received' rarely extends beyond antiquity and is surprisingly infrequent if one discounts studies devoted to broad-brush questions of imperial self-fashioning.¹ As a result, the reception of Greek and Roman enquiries into foreign lands and peoples is a topic that remains largely unexplored, even in the case of (otherwise high-profile) authors such as Herodotus.² In venturing out into what is largely uncharted territory, this chapter examines the role that ancient ethnography played in framing the understanding and experience of a multitude of colonial administrators, scientists and adventurers, whose collective efforts led to an unprecedented flowering of ethnographic and geographical knowledge during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It suggests that ethnographic receptions played an important role not only in the mechanisms and processes whereby geography, anthropology and classics were at this time variously mapped out and contested but also the very strategies by which European observers discursively 'positioned' themselves in relation to their colonial subjects.³

It is now widely acknowledged that the institutionalization of Classics as a discipline saw it become progressively entwined with colonial mindsets. This is due, in no small part, to pioneering attempts by Sally Humphreys and others to chart the (at times complicated) relationship between discourses of colonialism and what are commonly referred to as the 'processes of disciplinary formation'.⁴ Tracing the many ways in which, to use Phiroze Vasunia's words, 'discourses of antiquity intersect[ed] with the worlds of politics and empire'⁵ has, as a result, become an established field in its own right, generating a steady flow of articles, monographs and edited volumes.⁶ The recent upsurge in work documenting the role of Classics in colonial contexts means we now have a far more nuanced appreciation both of the wider culture of imperialism that shaped (and was, in turn, constituted within) the writings of individual members of the establishment during the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries – to take just one example – and the way in which the actions of specific individuals, structures or institutional practices variously contributed towards that

greater whole.⁷ In spite, or rather because, of these (significant) advances, the full complexity of the relationship between Classics and colonialism is only now becoming clear. Further work is undoubtedly required before we can arrive at a detailed understanding of the precise workings of a relationship that operated on multiple registers of understanding, power and knowledge.

This chapter focuses on one of the many gaps in our knowledge that remain in an attempt to tease out some of the complexities of this relationship. It examines the role that ancient ethnography played in the modern debate surrounding the identity and origins of the polytheistic tribes of Káfiristan – a wild territory spanning the modern Afghan province of Nuristan and the western margins of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province.⁸ It argues that a close engagement with historical accounts of foreign lands and peoples influenced the modes of enquiry and self-presentation adopted by (modern) observers and that this formed part of the wider processes of disciplinary formation referred to above. In doing so it will highlight the extent to which these ethnographic and geographical inquiries were variously framed or inspired by wider preoccupations with questions of race, the perceived vulnerability of Britain's Indian dominions to northern incursions and a more general tendency to assimilate the British imperial mission to a tradition of purportedly successful empire-building undertaken by Alexander the Great.⁹

Stories concerning the Macedonian conqueror had an important role to play in the history of Káfiristan not least because early encounters between western Europeans and local populations were mediated by claims that the Káfir tribes were descended from contingents of Greco-Macedonian soldiers who had crossed into Asia under Alexander's command.¹⁰ The opening remarks of W. Broadfoot's paper on Káfiristan and the Káfirs highlights the appeal that such stories held for metropolitan audiences:

The tradition that there existed in some remote valleys of the Hindu Kush tribes who were descended from the warriors of Alexander the Great has always excited peculiar interest among our countrymen, who pictured to themselves kindred spirits preserving their liberty and making themselves respected amongst overwhelming numbers of Asiatics.¹¹

The romantic allure of these imperial fantasies rendered them effectively impervious to repeated attempts to disprove them scientifically – as we shall see. The sense of affinity that they generated was also highly unusual insofar as it transcended the racial divide separating the inhabitants of the metropole from their native subjects and adjacent peoples such as the Káfirs.¹² It should also be noted, however, that this was far from a one-way process. Káfiri populations were equally active in constructing what has elsewhere been described as a conceptual 'middle ground' with the Europeans they encountered in an attempt to further their own interests and agendas.

The concept of the middle ground as shared systems of meaning and exchange that mediated encounters between groups of different outlook and culture was first introduced by Richard White in a landmark study of interactions between early pioneers and North American Indians inhabiting the Great Lakes region.¹³ It has since been applied to great effect in the study of the ancient world in a study highlighting the role that stories concerning various mythical returns (*nostoi*) from Troy played in

interactions between Greeks and non-Greeks.¹⁴ It is equally pertinent when considering the specific set of historical circumstances which lead to the construction of an 'imagined space' accessible (to varying extents) both to those acting as interlocutors for the various Káfirí tribes (and presumably the tribes themselves) and Europeans steeped in a Hellenic past. Whilst White's conceptual middle ground 'withered and died' as soon as the Great Lakes region proved unable to satisfy the demands of the European fur trade, the mutual knowledge and (mis)understanding that connected Káfirís with the British and others proved far more resilient, as we shall see.¹⁵ This blurring of boundaries in a remote and exotic setting created a fertile ground for ethnographic speculation on the part of government agents, travel writers, novelists and adventurers – who were well versed in both the classics and the scientific (and, in later instances, popular) literature of their day.¹⁶ Before we proceed to discuss the extent to which the ethnographic and geographical enquiries of Greek and Roman authors played a role in the study of Káfiristan, it will be necessary to outline the broader historical context in which such enquiries took place – often referred to as the 'Age of Empire'.

As the Great Powers scrambled to secure increasingly vast swathes of territory, the need to govern or otherwise influence hitherto unknown peoples meant that local cultures rapidly became the object of intense scrutiny.¹⁷ Foreign peoples were suddenly accessible and safe – a point highlighted by Talal Asad – and ethnographies proliferated as never before. In Great Britain, as elsewhere, this interest and enthusiasm manifested itself in human exhibitions in which members of the public could gaze in wonder at a wide variety of foreign peoples¹⁸ and in the founding of various learned societies, both metropolitan and national, including the Royal Geographical Society (1830), the Ethnological Society of London (1843) and a rival Anthropological Society of London (1863).¹⁹ These were followed, in due course, by institutions of higher learning such as the School of Oriental Studies – described by Lord Curzon as 'part of the necessary furniture of empire'.²⁰ Curzon's high-profile attempts to galvanize support for 'Oriental studies' were by no means the first time that the need to study the manners and customs of Britain's imperial subjects had been linked to the future success of colonial rule. They have, however, been widely seen as being indicative of Orientalist attitudes and a prevailing colonial *mentalité*:

our familiarity, not merely with the languages of the people of the East but with their customs, their feelings, their traditions, their history and religion, our capacity to understand what may be called the genius of the East, is the sole basis upon which we are likely to be able to maintain in the future the position we have won²¹

The idea that anthropology acted as an (at times enthusiastic) handmaiden to imperialism has been widely mooted, notably in Jean-Loup Amselle's wide-ranging critique of 'ethnological reason',²² a body of thought and practice arising from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century traditions of comparative nationalism and evolutionism but ultimately rooted in classical Greek thought.²³

Evidence for contemporary interest in the ethnographic and geographical traditions of antiquity is not hard to come by – not least because leading classicists and

historians such as J. L. Myres and G. B. Grundy were themselves active in the emergent disciplines of Geography and Anthropology.²⁴ Early issues of journals established with a view to furthering geographical and anthropological knowledge were peppered with references to classical texts. Examples include Myres' paper on Herodotean geography or C. R. Markham's discussion of 'Pytheas, the discoverer of Britain' – both of which feature in early editions of the *Geographical Journal*. Another notable example is Hyde Clarke's paper on 'The Egyptian colony and language in the Caucasus', in which Herodotean theorizing regarding the Egyptian origins of the Colchians (Hdt. 2.104) is at least partially borne out in the results of modern-day enquiries.²⁵

The high degree of prominence afforded to Classical texts and authors in the proceedings of learned societies such as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland can be explained in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most important of these is the self-conscious positioning of scholars keen to imbue their fledgling disciplines with the gravitas associated with more established sectors of the humanities.²⁶ Working in nascent disciplines with comparatively little empirical data at their disposal, they selectively mined the accounts of ancient authors whom they identified as their intellectual forebears in search of details that might illuminate modern conundrums. The impression that emerges is of a sense of collegiality and an (albeit largely tacit) assumption that the geographers and ethnographers of modernity had far more in common with their ancient colleagues than with their modern subjects – a point to which we shall return below. Matters are by no means straightforward, however, and it is possible to turn all this on its head to consider what impact this 'positioning' had on the study of Greco-Roman antiquity in general and ancient ethnographic thought in particular. It is relatively uncontroversial to argue that enquiries by authors such as Herodotus and Arrian were influential in shaping the intellectual apparatus of colonial empires, the institutions of power and knowledge through which foreign lands and peoples were variously subjected to the European gaze. Yet, the experience of exploration and empire also had a profound impact on the way in which the researches of classical authors were themselves 'received', understood and subsequently applied to the ethnographic subject. This interpenetration of knowledge and ideas is nowhere more apparent than in the study of Káfiristan – to which we shall now turn.

An area of some 5,000 square miles of steep, wooded valleys, Káfiristan is bounded to the north by the Hindu Kush, the Kunar range to the south, the Alishang and its tributary the Alingar to the west. Its eastern boundary with Chitral was, for the most part, only roughly defined until Sir Mortimer Durand oversaw the effective partitioning of the region into British and Afghani spheres of influence in the fateful Anglo-Afghan agreement of 1893.²⁷ The region was, at the time, known as 'Káfiristan' – a name derived from the Persian 'land of the kafirs', and thus ultimately the Arabic 'Kafir' (non-believer). Shortly after the so-called 'Durand Line' was established, the modern appellation of Nuristan ('the land of light/enlightenment') was conferred on the region following its conquest by the Emir of Kabul, Abdur Rahman Khan, in 1895–96. Disorganized, weakened by incessant infighting and comprehensively outgunned, the Kafirs rapidly succumbed to the Emir's forces. The Afghan conquest was followed by systematic attempts to convert the polytheistic tribes to Islam. Traditions native to the region were systematically rooted out in the mass conversions

that ensued, causing horror and outrage amongst those eager to evangelize the population.²⁸ Their (often highly emotive) accounts detailing the progressive dismantling of Káfiri culture find parallels both before and after the conquest, however, as the precarious situation of the Káfiri tribes had long been a matter of deep concern.²⁹ In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that the vast majority of scholarly discourse on Káfiristan and its peoples had been informed by a desire to record the traditions of perpetually embattled tribes at risk of extinction right from the outset. This sense of urgency and purpose invariably found expression in a series of articles, open letters and public speeches aimed at galvanizing institutional and popular support for government initiatives that would protect Káfiri lives and culture. The plight of Káfiristan was also emphasized by those campaigning to eradicate slavery – a subject of great concern to missionaries and abolitionists alike – since the lawless nature of the region was for a long time attributed to the depredations of Afghani slavers who reportedly preyed on the region. Such concerns commonly found expression in accounts that sought to portray the Káfirs as archetypal ‘noble barbarians’ who, in contrast to their neighbours and for all their objectionable qualities, deserved both the pity and active support of metropolitan audiences.³⁰

The publicity that accompanied the conquest of Káfiristan by the Emir’s forces stands in marked contrast to the tentative manner in which (Western) knowledge of the region gradually accumulated. The touch paper was lit as early as 1792 when James Rennell updated his hugely popular *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* to incorporate recently published Indo-Persian accounts of a people referred to as the Yusuf-Zyes, who traced their lineage back to those serving in Alexander’s army together with a dynasty that had claimed to be directly descended from Alexander himself (the Sultani).³¹ Rennell pronounced these claims credible on the grounds of their being variously endorsed by authorities such as Mahomed Cazim, Abu’l Fazl (Abul Fazil) and Suján Rai (Soojan Rae), together with their translator, Captain Kirkpatrick, from whose manuscript he quoted extensively.³² The descendants of Alexander’s followers were located at Bijore (Bajaur), identified by Rennell as Bazira, echoing Suján Rai’s comment that ‘these “Europeans” ... continued to preserve their ascendancy over their neighbours, which their ancestors may be supposed to have possessed.’³³ Their territory was described as Sewad, Bijore and ‘the tract situated between those provinces, and the rivers of Cabul and Indus.’³⁴ What follows is a set of ethnographic reports that would be repeated, in various forms, for well over a century.³⁵ Bijore and Sewad were reported to be adjacent to a region named Kuttore (Kator), commonly referred to by its Muslim neighbours as ‘Caferistan.’³⁶ Its inhabitants were variously described as fair-skinned individuals who possessed a distinct language, a robust constitution, idolatrous beliefs and were ‘exceedingly fond of wine and hog’s flesh.’³⁷ Although even the precise geographical location of the region remained a matter of speculation, the idea of ‘Caferistan’ was firmly planted in the European imagination from this point onwards.

In spite of its ever-increasing proximity to British territory, Káfiristan remained very much an enigma during the decades that followed. Commentators in Lahore and London would later compare it to a fairyland,³⁸ whose mapping and exploration would provide a reliable indication that the work of the Geographical Society had effectively

drawn to a close.³⁹ This state of obscurity became a source of mounting concern during the early nineteenth century as Russia and Britain became increasingly embroiled in the 'Great Game': a protracted struggle for supremacy in Central Asia that at times boiled over into open conflict in the form of proxy wars centring on Afghanistan.⁴⁰ Proverbially remote and lawless, Káfiristan remained closed to outsiders for most of the nineteenth century as travellers to the region rarely survived to tell the tale. It took a good deal of searching, therefore, before Mountstuart Elphinstone – recently appointed as Britain's envoy to the Emir of Kabul – could find a volunteer willing to spy out the territory and its inhabitants. The report of his informant, the intrepid 'Moolah Najeeb', was reproduced in an appendix to Elphinstone's *Account of the Kingdom of Cabul and its Dependencies in Persia and India* (1819). Its detailed descriptions of topics as wide-ranging as 'Caufir' tribal organization, religious beliefs, dietary preferences and costume represented a significant advance in Western knowledge of Káfiristan, arousing widespread interest amongst metropolitan audiences.

Although initially fascinated by reports of tribes claiming Macedonian descent, Elphinstone's enquiries lead him to conclude that Káfiri/Káfir languages shared the common characteristic of having their origins in Sanskrit (619–20). This, Elphinstone observed, 'seems fatal to the descent of the Caufirs from the Greeks, and their traditions do not furnish us with any distinct account of their origin' (620). The existence of a separate kingdom (Durwaz) ruled by a dynast who claimed to be a descendent of Alexander was, however, acknowledged, leaving the door open to future speculation regarding the identity and origins of the Káfir tribes. The manner in which this debate unfolded over the subsequent decades sheds important light on the way in which reception of classical accounts shaped the discursive strategies by which European observers selectively 'positioned' themselves in relation to their colonial subjects. It also demonstrates the extent to which the nature and content of their (modern) inquiries into foreign lands and peoples reflect a wider engagement with classical antiquity.

Whilst attempts to tap into the intellectual traditions of non-Europeans, ancient and contemporary, had been underway for some time, progress in this field was sufficiently uneven to allow for wide variations in enthusiasm and ability when it came to deciphering non-European scripts and dialects that, in many cases, were in the very process of 'discovery'.⁴¹ As was so often the case, much of the groundwork was undertaken by individuals whose knowledge of the classics either equalled or outstripped that of the territories or peoples they set out to describe.⁴² There was, as a result, plenty of scope for disagreement when it came to questions of methodology and approach – a reflection of the fact that disciplinary boundaries were still very much in the process of being mapped out and contested. Opinion was essentially divided within the exploring community between those who insisted on meticulous philological research before venturing into the field and those possessing the blithe self-confidence of the ancient ethnographers for whom it was enough to register that a population spoke in a language that 'sounded like the squeaking of bats'.⁴³ Such differences of opinion are readily apparent in the transcribed comments of the president of the Royal Geographical Society that followed a reading of McNair's paper:

In this connection I smile somewhat at Dr. Leitner's profound German dialectic in the discussion on the paper read by MacNair over the preliminary preparation in language required by an explorer to do his work effectively. Where man is equipped by that instinctive faculty of accommodating himself to the men of all nations with their physical attributes and surroundings, I think he may dispense, in a large measure, with the science of language as an open sesame. Nature has her own methods.⁴⁴

Under such circumstances it is perhaps not unsurprising that early commentators on Káfiristan should reach for classical authors in search of illumination – accessible, for the most part, either in the original Greek or in translation.⁴⁵ Indeed, in some cases one gets the distinct impression that classical authors received far more credence than their (modern) native interlocutors.⁴⁶ Local populations appear to have been equally active, however, in constructing what has already been described as a conceptual 'middle ground' with European observers in which classical pasts were very much to the fore. This process of myth-making invariably centred on the claim to be descended from either Alexander or his settlers and that the Káfirs were therefore 'brothers' of the 'Farangís' (= British).⁴⁷ Claims to kinship were already recorded by Elphinstone, as we have seen, but they are also recorded in 1839 when the ill-fated British Afghan mission, lead by Sir William Macnaghten, was at Jalalabad.⁴⁸

The myths propagated by local populations were matched by imaginative genealogies imposed by European observers: contemporary sources mention Russian claims that the inhabitants were of Slavic origin (and thus natural subjects of the Tzar),⁴⁹ while other observers follow ancient accounts by linking them to a far earlier race: the ancient Nysaeans – a subject to which we shall return below. The most notable aspect of this debate is the frequency with which more sober pronouncements linking the Káfirs to Indo-Aryan migrations of the second millennium BC were consistently ignored by commentators keen to find 'Greeks' in Central Asia. Whilst strategic interest waned in a region described as presenting 'little more than a sentimental and scientific interest'⁵⁰ compared to the passes of the Hindu Kush, the basins of the Chitral and Gilgit rivers (thought to be likely theatres of operations insofar as they provided viable routes for troops advancing on India), the region remained of great interest to missionaries hoping to capitalize on the mutually-antagonistic relationship that existed between the polytheistic Káfirs and Islam and the claims to a common bloodline.⁵¹ These, it was hoped, would make the Káfirs naturally predisposed towards Christianity.

It is now time to explore the way in which ancient accounts have framed discussion of Káfiri manners and customs in more detail. Similarities in tone and outlook that come with the self-conscious description of another culture are not hard to find. Early descriptions typically refer to the Káfirs' inability to sit cross-legged together with the fact that they produced and drank wine, played leap-frog and shook hands 'as Englishmen'⁵² – the implication being that such qualities are indicative of Greco-Macedonian descent. This comparative rhetoric can, of course, be compared with statements by ancient authors; for example, Herodotus book 2 in which Greek and Egyptian customs are systematically compared: deference to one's elders (2.80), the

practice of writing/calculating from right to left, multiple scripts (2.36) or calendars (2.4). There are also remarkable similarities of format due to the (somewhat formulaic) presentation of ethnographic data. Take, for example, McNair's account detailing the name of the tribe concerned, their language, appearance, fondness for and manner of dancing, domestic architecture, furniture, foods, temples design, means of disposing of the deceased, dress, politics, religious beliefs. Whilst it cannot necessarily be demonstrated in all cases that this is a direct and self-conscious response to classical ethnographies, the fact that classical references abound throughout the text makes it difficult to argue that they were merely paying lip-service to scientific convention.

The frequency with which parallels from classical antiquity are cited is highly revealing. Comparisons with Sparta regarding the status of helots – likened to that of the Bárís – are particularly notable:

There is a tribe dwelling among the Síáh-Posh Káfirís, but not of them, just like the Helots among the Greeks. These people are known as Bárís, and are probably the remnant of some of the aboriginals of the country or neighbouring parts. These people carry on all mechanical trades, such as those of blacksmith, carpenter, weaver, cutler, and the like, and all manner of occupations. The Káfirís look upon such avocations as mean and disreputable, and consider the profession of arms and agriculture alone to be creditable. On journeys these Bárís are employed to carry luggage.⁵³

The perpetual state of warfare against their Muslim neighbours (and nearby tribes) was likewise deemed very 'Spartan' together with the social stigma attached to *not* having killed a Muslim.⁵⁴ Instructive parallels are also found in Herodotus' description of the manner in which Scythian governors honour those who have taken enemies captive and means of sealing covenants.⁵⁵ Notes on the mineral wealth of the region elsewhere make reference to *the first writer* to have offered a description of the Indian's tribute to Persia and the way in which it was obtained: Herodotus' now somewhat infamous passage involving gold-digging ants.⁵⁶ Herodotus' claim that such creatures could be seen on display in the Persian king's menagerie is laid aside in favour of the (thoroughly Hecataean) suggestion that tales of ants

might ... have reference to a large species of marmot existing in these regions: for these, when making their burrows, throw out the fresh earth, amongst which quantities of gold were found.⁵⁷

Tales such as these are seen to be borne out by reports of precious metals found in the streams and rivers in Káfiristan and vague reference to 'the traditions of the people of these countries'.⁵⁸ In a later intervention, the same author also notes 'The peculiar method of weaving ... Kásh-Kári shawls brings to mind a passage in Pliny with regards to the fabric from which the Coan vests, so much esteemed by the Greeks and Romans, were made'.⁵⁹ Close attention is paid to material culture as empirical evidence of Greek descent: early accounts refer to the use of silver cups,⁶⁰ largely overlooked by later authors but 'rediscovered' by the Danish botanist Lennart Edenberg in the mid-twentieth century, together with items such as the *Wai* dish stand, thought to be 'in Grecian mould'.⁶¹

In a particularly revealing aside noting a recent decline in recruits for the Army Medical Department, together with the fact that some army doctors were now seeking distinction as soldiers rather than as surgeons, Broadfoot emphasizes the value of 'men of considerable scientific attainments ... [with an] educated power of observation and a knowledge of human nature' as 'individuals who could be deputed to visit certain tribes and prepare them for our intended policy'. He then goes on to cite Democedes of Croton, the son-in-law of Milo, who, on being taken prisoner with Polycrates, was dispatched to the Court of Darius⁶² as an example of the protection which medical training afforded an individual when travelling amongst 'barbarians':

[T]he agency at Gilgit was reopened with Captain Durand in charge, and a person was wanted who could be deputed to visit certain tribes and prepare them for our intended policy. For such pioneering work medical officers are specially fitted. Possessed of considerable scientific attainments, they have educated power of observation and a knowledge of human nature – most valuable qualities – not to mention their professional skill, which at once commends them to the respect and protection of even savage tribes. There are plenty of instances. In ancient days ... Democedes, the physician of Crotona and son-in-law of Milo, was taken prisoner with Polycrates, and sent to the Court of Darius; he cured the king and queen and received honours, but his companion was crucified!⁶³

Whilst Democedes left no ethnographic account that we know of, unlike another Greek doctor resident at the Persian court, Broadfoot's readers would have taken it for granted that so-called 'British agents' would have been responsible for writing detailed ethnographies of the peoples they encountered.⁶⁴

One could also point to parallels arising from the use of similar modes of discourse: claims to superior knowledge based on the evidence of autopsy.⁶⁵ Káfiri wine is on one occasion likened to a badly-corked Chablis.⁶⁶ A particularly good example of the way in which ancient accounts of foreign lands and peoples framed the attitudes and approaches of modern-day observers can be found in the writings of one author in particular, whose hearty commendation of J. W. McCrindle's translations as 'highly portable' gives a fairly clear indication of their importance in guiding observations made 'in the field'.

An experienced surveyor and serving member of the Boundary Commission, Colonel Holdich's analysis of the identity and origins of Káfiri tribes was predicated upon a highly selective reading of geographical, ethnographic and quasi-historical details relayed by Arrian when distinguishing between the Assakenoi and the Nysaioi (i.e. Arrian's scepticism regarding the link to Dionysus is entirely overlooked.) The Assakenoi are described by Arrian as:

[N]ot men of great stature like the Indians ... not so brave, nor yet so swarthy as most Indians. They were in old times subject to the Assyrians; then, after a period of Median rule, submitted to the Persians ... The Nysaioi, however, are not an Indian race, but descendants of those who came to India with Dionysius.⁶⁷

Further references to Megasthenes, Strabo and Polyaeus prompt Holdich to conclude: 'All these lively legends point to a very early subjugation of India by a Western race (who

may have been of Greek origin) before the invasions of Assyrian, Mede, or Persian' (48).⁶⁸ This identification of the Káfirs as descendants of the ancient Nysaeans is entirely convenient insofar as it sets the British imperial mission in the context of successive incursions from the west (trumping Russian claims alluded to above). Holdich's paper concludes with discussion of antiquarian discoveries in the Kunar valley bearing an unknown script that recalls 'a Greek alphabet of archaic type' (47) and a translation of a Káfiri hymn to their war-god Gish, interpreted as, 'a Bacchic hymn (slightly incoherent, perhaps, as is natural) ... [that] only wants the accessories of vine-leaves and ivy to make it entirely classical'.⁶⁹ Modern and ancient ethnographic observations are made to sit side by side in such a manner that they are essentially self-validating. The Káfirs are, in Raverty's opinion, more Greek than the Greeks,⁷⁰ whilst later commentators draw parallels between Káfiri costume and the traditional attire of rural Greece. The ethnographical riddles of Káfiristan even lead some to reach for a people whom ancient ethnographers had long found invaluable for resolving problematic questions of provenance: Colonel Holdich refers to traditions of Greek or Pelasgian origins.⁷¹

What implications does this have, however, for the way in which we think about the relationship between *ancient* ethnography and its modern counterpart? On the one hand, we can explain a lot of this in terms of the Orientalist conceit that, to quote James Mill's *History of British India*, 'in beholding the Hindus of the present day, we are beholding the Hindus of many ages past; and are carried back, as it were, into the deep recesses of antiquity'.⁷² This, together with the tendency to assimilate British rule with that of the Greek kings, made it easy for boundaries between modern and ancient ethnographer to become more than a little blurred.⁷³ On the other hand, the uncertain origins of the Káfirs meant that questions of distance, exploited, to great effect, in Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would be King* (1888), remained very much in play. Kipling's reliance upon contemporary descriptions of Káfiristan is rendered explicit in cases where the protagonists refer to individual authorities by name. He is noticeably selective, however, when it comes to who or what is cited in order not to dampen the audience's sense of adventure.⁷⁴ The remote exoticism of Káfiristan made it an ideal setting for a narrative that positioned itself, Janus-like, between metropolitan and Anglo-Indian audiences.⁷⁵ Questions of race and identity and observed difference – or the lack of it – played a central role in this critique.⁷⁶

The (undeniably perverted) racial logic, to which those observing Káfiristan all-too frequently subscribed, made it entirely plausible that Káfirs might once have shared in 'the fruits of civilization' even in cases where Greco-Macedonian descent had been discounted:

In other respects they are what they have been made by uncontrollable circumstance ... yet they are not savages. Some of them have the heads of philosophers and statesmen. Their features are Aryan, and their mental capabilities considerable. Their love of decoration, their carving, their architecture, all point to a time when they were higher in the human scale than they are at present. They could never be brutal savages such as are some of the African races, but they are as degraded in many respects as it is possible for such types to ever become.⁷⁷

We must also think, however, in terms of the creeping institutionalization and professionalization of fields of enquiry such as ethnography, classics and geography, and the

role that classical texts may have played in shaping the understanding and expectations of early observers who saw nothing more – or less – than what they expected to see. Further work is undoubtedly required but it seems reasonable to suggest that receptions of ethnographic texts may have played an important role in defining what it meant to undertake ethnography to begin with – at least where Káfristan is concerned. Although it is now widely accepted that classical texts by authors such as Herodotus and Arrian played a significant role in shaping the intellectual apparatus of colonial empires, the extent to which the experience of empire affected the way in which the enquiries of classical ethnographers were themselves ‘received’ remains all but uncharted territory.

Notes

- 1 This chapter has benefitted hugely from the helpful suggestions offered by audiences at both the Cardiff Classical Association Conference (2010) and the University Liverpool’s Receptions Reading Group. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge both these and the help of Phiroze Vasunia who generously commented on the original draft and allowed me access to (as yet) unpublished materials. I am equally indebted to Thomas Harrison and Lindsay Allen for illuminating (and highly enjoyable) discussions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exploration and travel writing. As always, any outstanding errors or omissions in what follows are my responsibility alone.
- 2 For ancient receptions of early ethnographic enquiry, see contributions to Pigoñ (2008) together with Kim (this volume; 2009): Achaemenid ethnography; Hall (1989): Attic drama; Murray (1972): Hellenistic historiography; Dench (2005); Woolf (2009; 2011): Roman ethnographies. For modern receptions, see now Moyer (2011); Skinner (2012); Harrison, this volume.
- 3 In attempting to reconstruct the intellectual and cultural milieu of (predominantly) European observers, one must first acknowledge the importance of another key text, namely, the Bible. See Harrison, this volume; Kidd (2006); Marchand (2009).
- 4 Humphreys (1978; 2004). See, for example, Stray (1998) for the study of Classics in English schools and universities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 5 Vasunia (2005b: 39).
- 6 For recent interventions, see Moyer (2011); Hall and Vasunia (2010); Goff (2005); Bradley (2010).
- 7 See Harrison (2008) for discussion of the ideologies and assumptions underpinning the modern study of ancient empires together with Vlassopoulos (2010).
- 8 For which see Klimburg (1999; 2004).
- 9 Such attitudes were entirely commonplace in their day. Take, for example, Bevan’s comments in the preface to *House of Seleucus* in which the British Raj is seen as picking up the baton that fell to the ground when the light of Greek civilization was finally extinguished in the East: ‘The civilization which perished from India with the extinction of the Greek kings has come back again in the British official. What will the effect be? An experiment of enthralling interest is being tried before our eyes. Those who predict its issue by some easy commonplace about the eternal distinction of “East” and “West” “have given inadequate consideration to the history of East and West. Hellenism has as yet had very little time to show what it can do’; Bevan (1902:

- 19). For contrasting approaches to the study of Hellenism in the East, cf. Mairs (2006: 23–4); Green (1990: 316, 320). For related discussion, see Vasunia (2005a; 2005b; 2010; 2013); Bayly (1996: 138); Bradley (2010). For comparisons between Achaemenid Persia and the British Empire, see Harrison (2011). For discussion of a variety of responses to the figure of Alexander during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see, in particular, Briant (2005); Vasunia (2007); Hagerman (2009).
- 10 At the same time, several ruling dynasties from neighbouring regions also claimed direct descent from Alexander himself.
- 11 Broadfoot (1897: 359).
- 12 Unusual but not unqualified: see Metcalf (1997) and below for the way in which this related to a sense of shared Aryan origins. For discussion of the role Classics played in Victorian racial theory see now Challis (2010).
- 13 White (1991).
- 14 Malkin (1998: 16ff.), but see now Woolf (2009); Antonaccio (2010: 44–5).
- 15 White (1991: 523).
- 17 See, for example, Stray (1998) and Phiroze Vasunia's meticulous study of the selection procedures of the Indian Civil Service in which it is argued that 'Greek and Latin were instrumental to ... efforts to create a class of imperial "gentlemen", ideally drawn from Oxford or Cambridge ... and endowed with good status and character'. Vasunia (2005a: 37). For more recent accounts of travels in Káfiristan, see Newby (1958); Barrington et al. (2006).
- 17 Cf. Metcalf (1997: 113): 'the knowledge the British amassed can not be separated from its role in the successful working of colonial rule. India was "known" in ways that would sustain a system of colonial authority, and through categories that made it fundamentally different from Europe'.
- 18 See Sadiah Qureshi's compelling and detailed account of the widespread popular enthusiasm for foreign peoples in nineteenth-century Britain (Qureshi 2011).
- 19 The study of foreign peoples and cultures received the stamp of academic respectability in 1884 when the University of Oxford appointed E. B. Tylor as first Reader and, three years on, Professor of Anthropology. (Liverpool would award James Frazer the first chair in Social Anthropology in 1907.)
- 20 Curzon (1915: 191–2). Founded in 1916, now London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).
- 21 Curzon (1915: 184). See Said (1978: 214–15). Born of a close engagement with native interlocutors, teachers and translators, this familiarity and understanding has been shown to be rather more ambiguous in nature than Lord Curzon might have liked: 'the authorization of orientalist strategies in the furthering of the imperial state by reference to Indian forms of cultural authority also facilitated a variety of distinct cultural and political projects by Indian intellectuals' (Dodson 2007: 6).
- 22 '[T]he continuity-breaking procedure that extracts, refines, and classifies with the intention of isolating types, whether they be in the realm of politics (state society versus stateless society), economics (self-sufficient versus market economy), religion (paganism versus Islam), ethnicity or culture': Amselle (1998: 1). See Qureshi (2011: 185–93) for discussion of early anthropologists' attempts to capitalize upon popular enthusiasm for human exhibitions and the extent to which such displays served to bolster claims to scientific authority.
- 23 Amselle (1998) provides an authoritative account of the extent to which the politics of anthropological enquiry have been allied to the activities and interests of the colonizing West.

- 24 Cf. Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederic Goldsmid's discussion of the acropolis at Susa (1893) and Munro and Anthony on the exploration of Mysia, funded in part by grants from the Hellenic Society (1897). For discussion of J. L. Myres and other 'geographical historians', see Clarke (1999: 45–65).
- 25 Markham (1893); Clarke (1874). For Markham's role within the Royal Geographical Society, together with that of Holdich (mentioned below), see Collier and Inkpen (2002).
- 26 Geographers, ethnographers, anthropologists and historians all famously looked to antiquity for a founding father – usually, but not always, they found Herodotus, e.g. Myres (1908). Cf. Collier and Inkpen (2002: 276) for attitudes within the Royal Geographical Society and the contested nature of surveying during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- 27 For detailed discussion of matters geographical, historical and anthropological, see Klimburg (1976; 1999). For the activities of the Afghan Boundary Commission, see Moran (2005).
- 28 For reasons that will become clear below, Káfiristan was considered ripe for evangelization; see Wood (1814: 187): 'they offer a fairer field for missionary exertion than is to be found anywhere else on the continent of Asia'. Cf. Downes (1873). The only tribes to escape Islamization were those whose territories fell within British jurisdiction, i.e. east of the Durand Line.
- 29 But cf. Robertson (1897: 577), expressing the opinion that 'religious progress in Káfiristan was progress towards Muhammedism. It meant an advance in civilization certainly and for the largest portion of the community, the feminine, it was an immense stride in morality and material happiness.'
- 30 For example, Raverty (1859). For discourses relating to barbarians, noble or otherwise, see Meek (1976); Campbell (2006).
- 31 Rennell (1792: 161–3). The first edition, published in 1783, predated the publication of Kirkpatrick's manuscript. For further discussion/references, see Vasunia (2013).
- 32 Rennell (1792: 162).
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid., 163.
- 35 Vasunia (2013). Vasunia makes the point that although Henry Yule, author of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on Káfiristan (1882), would later single out these reports as having been instrumental in sparking Europe's fascination with the land and peoples of Káfiristan, it was Rennell's decision to include them in his *Memoir* that was decisive in this respect.
- 36 Rennell (1792: 164).
- 37 Rennell (1792: 165–6) quoting Kirkpatrick's translations of the author of the *Dil Kusha* and Sherefeddin.
- 38 Downes (1873: 1).
- 39 Col. Yule remarking on Col. Tanner's paper; see Howard (1889: 10). For a review of early exploration of the region, see also Gurdon (1936).
- 40 The term is attributed to Arthur Conolly (1807–42), an intelligence officer with the British East India Company's 6th Bengal Light Cavalry.
- 41 For related discussion, see Harrison, this volume; Marchand (2009).
- 42 See Vasunia (2005a); Hagerman (2009: 354–5). Cf. Marchand (1996) for affairs in Germany. Sir Aurel Stein (1927: 518) talks of Col. Wauhope as 'a sound classical scholar' in the India Survey Department.
- 43 An allusion to Hdt. 4.183.

- 44 Howard (1889: 48). A tribute by the President of the Royal Geographical Society. Cf. the preface to J. W. McCrindle's *Ancient India* in which Greek insularity is subject to critique: 'We can hardly wonder, when we consider the distant and sequestered situation of India, that the first conceptions which the Greeks had of it should have been of this nebulous character, but it seems somewhat remarkable that they should have learned hardly anything of importance regarding it from the expeditions which were successively undertaken against it by the Egyptians under Sesostris, the Assyrians under Semiramis, and the Persians first under Kyros and afterwards under Dareios the son of Hystaspes' (McCrindle 1877: 4–5).
- 45 See, in particular, J. W. McCrindle's 1877 publication *Ancient India as described by Megasthenês and Arrian*. Classical texts were subjected to rigorous scrutiny by individuals such as Charles Masson (1800–53), an early authority on the archaeology and history of Afghanistan, whose somewhat chequered past left him open to demands for ethnographic, geographical or topographical information that would further the interests of the crown.
- 46 See Kennedy (2009: 49) for discussion of a 'critical change in what counted as scientifically valid knowledge' that resulted from efforts to standardize the observations made by travellers and explorers through the publication of guidebooks. Direct observation on behalf of the ethnographer/explorer therefore took precedence over the evidence of native informants (*ibid.*).
- 47 'It may easily be supposed that this account excited great attention during the journey of the mission to Caubul, and that we were not long at Peshawer before we began to enquire after our Macedonian neighbours' (Elphinstone 1819: 427).
- 48 Their rebuttal left the Káfirs vulnerable to Afghan encroachment. Subsequent ethnographic accounts are, as a result, overwhelmingly preoccupied by the need to document whatever vestiges of cultural memory survived the mass conversions that followed.
- 49 Biddulph (1880: 126).
- 50 Barrow (1885: 2).
- 51 Downes (1873: 15). For kinship, see Raverty (1859: 368): 'this opinion of itself, may hereafter smooth the road for zealous pioneers of the Gospel'.
- 52 Originally from Elphinstone's (Najeeb's) account but echoed.
- 53 Raverty (1896: 96). See also Raverty (1864: 149).
- 54 Raverty (1859: 358).
- 55 Hdt. 4. 66, 70.
- 56 Raverty (1859: 329); Hdt. 3.102–5.
- 57 Raverty (1859: 330).
- 58 Raverty (1859: 331). The author also cites Ctesias' *Ind.* cap. 25 (*sic.*) and Aelian's *NH* XVI.20 on a species of wild ass (Gor-khar).
- 59 Raverty (1864: 133).
- 60 That is, Elphinstone (1839: 384); Masson (by hearsay). See Klimburg (1999: 214ff.) for discussion.
- 61 Robertson (1896: 162).
- 62 Broadfoot (1897: 363–4). Hdt. 3.129–30. See also Vlassopoulos, this volume.
- 63 Broadfoot (1897: 363–4).
- 64 See Harrison, this volume.
- 65 For example, Tanner (1881: 278–9).
- 66 'Through the kindness of the Sipah Salar, the Amir's commander-in-chief, I have had the opportunity of tasting the best brand of this classical liquor, and I agree with

- Baber – it is not of a high class. It reminded me of badly corked Chablis, which it much resembled in appearance’ (Holdich 1896: 49).
- 67 Arr. *Indica* I 1–5.
- 68 Following Arr. *Indica* I 1–5.
- 69 Holdich (1896: 48). For more recent discussion of Káfirí religion and culture, see Klimburg (1976; 1999); Jettmar (1986); Parkes (1987).
- 70 ‘The stock from which most of these Káfirís probably sprung may be said to be more truly Greek than the people who occupy Greece at the present. The followers of the Macedonian Alexander, as we read in the accounts of his campaigns, recognized in them the descendants of a still older Greek colony, planted in the parts they occupy, by Dionysius, and the Bacchic dance, and remains of orgiastic worship of Dionysius, as well as other evidently Hellenic memories, are still existent among these people’ (Raverty 1896: 67).
- 71 Holdich (1896: 43).
- 72 Mill (1858: 151). See Harrison, this volume.
- 73 Mairs (2006); Vasunia (2013).
- 74 This has led Marx to observe that, ‘Kipling no doubt had sufficient reason to exclude sources that would diminish Káfiristan’s sense of mystery, preferring a Káfiristan where “no one has gone” (252) over one that had already become part of the political machinations of imperial politics’ (Marx 1999: 56).
- 75 Kipling’s decision to use Káfiristan as the setting for *The Man Who Would be King* provides yet another indication of the extent to which it functioned as a byword for the exotic. A more recent example of the exotic allure of Káfiristan as a space for adventure can be found in a tale of self-discovery set in 1939 titled *Die Reise nach Kafiristan* (2001) – directed by Donatello and Fosco Dubini.
- 76 Edward Marx highlights Kipling’s achievement in penning an allegorical tale that both ‘spoke to Anglo-India’s troubled fascination with race’ and ‘appealed to the home audience’s desire for a narrative critical of colonial excess’ (Marx 1999: 61). See *The Man Who Would be King*, 222: ‘These men aren’t niggers; they’re English! Look at their eyes – look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their houses. They’re the lost tribes, or something like it, and they’ve grown to be English.’ Marx concludes: ‘Dravot and Carnehan are denied the opportunity to impose a racial hierarchy similar to that of late nineteenth-century British colonies by the simple fact that the Kafirs are not marked by racial difference ... What is precisely interesting about the story is not the characteristic racism of the two British adventurers, but the way they develop alternative forms of hierarchy in the explicit absence of race as a signifying difference’ (Marx 1999: 62–3). For persuasive analysis of the geography of adventure as ‘geared towards certain politics and away from others’, see Phillips (1997: 168).
- 77 Robertson (1896: 4).

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Exploring Virgin Fields: Henry and George Rawlinson on Ancient and Modern Orient

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A tale of two brothers

Henry and George Rawlinson must rank as one of the more extraordinary pairs of high-achieving and influential brothers.¹ Henry Rawlinson (1810–95) not only played a leading – if controversial – role in the decipherment of cuneiform.² He was also a soldier, explorer, diplomat, politician and outdoorsman who played a central role in the defence of Kandahar during the Afghan War of 1839–42; sat as an MP (twice), a director of the East India Company and a member of its successor, the India Council; who kept a leopard, a lion and a mongoose in his residency in Baghdad; who broke his collar-bone hunting for wild boar on the banks of the Tigris, and shot his last partridge at the age of 75.³ His younger brother George (1812–1902) led a more sheltered life, by contrast: as Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford and (through Gladstone's patronage) as a canon of Canterbury Cathedral. Some anecdotes suggest that he took a conservative view even of these responsibilities: that he would look out from his window in the King's Arms Hotel to check that there was no audience for his lecture before leaving the city for the term; or that he was forced to defend his academic role within the Cathedral.⁴ Nevertheless, he used the leisure that these posts afforded him to generate a vast scholarly output.

When Henry Rawlinson left England as a cadet bound for Bombay at the age of 17, he was not to see his brother again for a period of 22 years. Judging from George's account of his brother's school-boy escapades, or of the tree in their house at Chadlington, 'hacked and hewn about its stem' in the months before Henry's departure to India, 'in illustration of the wounds which he meant to inflict on his barbarian antagonists',⁵ it appears that their differing personalities were already well established. Henry was already a soldier 'in his thoughts and aspirations', nicknamed 'The General' by his siblings.⁶ Although the journal written early in his time in India reveals religious struggles, remorse over the (regular) carousing and (occasional) brawling in which he

took part, and a propensity to theological debates over the immateriality of the soul, they were the struggles of someone who recognized his inability to be able to 'abstract himself in prayer'.⁷ For George, the 'champion of a learned orthodoxy in theology',⁸ it was a different matter. When George attempts, in his memoir of his brother, to sum up his life in terms of Christian virtues, he only manages to underline their differences: Henry, he wrote, 'held the broad view of doing good because it was good', although he was 'not committed to the daily performances of those religious acts and practices which to many are the essentials of an upright life'.⁹

The two brothers were also different in their approach to their overlapping fields of research. Henry, according to George,

liked the first plunge into a subject, and the broad views and bold outlines which are suitable at the inception of a new work; he disliked the elaboration of details, and the careful working out in due proportion of all the subordinate matters which are necessary in order to produce finish and completeness. It may be said that he did the work of a pioneer rather than that of a thorough and perfect explorer.¹⁰

By contrast, implicitly, the scholar-brother was able to develop the pioneer's insights and to integrate them into a broader structure. At the same time, in one letter, written in the context of his making corrections and enlargements to his brother's *Herodotus* (for its 1862 second edition), Henry disparages his brother, describing him and Gardner Wilkinson (who, like Henry, contributed notes to George's commentary) as 'both to a certain extent penny a liners and rather popular than deep'.¹¹

With all their differences and distance from one another, however, the two brothers' careers were also profoundly intertwined. From an early stage in his cuneiform work, Henry was working through his brother in Oxford. 'Who is your Arabic professor at Oxford?' he wrote to George in 1836. 'And is he, like Lee at Cambridge, interested in Oriental literature and antiquities? If so, I should very much like to enter into correspondence with him.'¹² By the time that Henry's work had gained him an extensive reputation, the younger brother could ride on his coat-tails.¹³ The idea that Henry might contribute to an edition of *Herodotus* was born out of the ecstatic reception that met his return to England in 1849, a reception that included a lecture at the Royal Asiatic Society (in February 1850) chaired by the Prince Consort; his engagement with the publisher John Murray was later described by George as 'among the most important results of these overtures'.¹⁴ Henry's contributions – a 'general supervision over the Oriental portion of the comment', as well as 'lend[ing] his aid throughout in all that concerns the geography, ethnography and history of the Eastern nations' – were clearly the unique selling-point of the edition; together with Gardner Wilkinson's contributions on Egypt, they would 'lend to the work itself its principal and most permanent interest'.¹⁵ George's memoir of Henry, published three years after his brother's death, artfully cements his brother's reputation, in doing so covering over a number of difficult issues.¹⁶

How have the brothers fared since in terms of reputation? '[H]ated with a venom that can be felt in all the memoirs' of the Oxford of his day,¹⁷ almost entirely absent from intellectual histories of the Victorian age,¹⁸ George Rawlinson nevertheless continues to enjoy perhaps a surprising status in two regards: first, for his translation

of Herodotus, still widely read today; secondly, as a kind of representative bogeyman of antediluvian scholarship on the ancient Near East. Rawlinson's *Fifth Oriental Monarchy*, for example, the volume of his series of *Oriental Monarchies* dedicated to Achaemenid Persia, was singled out for particular contempt in one of the founding essays of the Achaemenid History Workshop.¹⁹ For Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, the originator of the Achaemenid History Workshops, Rawlinson's work signally failed to take advantage of the new Iranian material available to him, using it 'only ... to supplement the data of the Greek sources'.²⁰ It was also impossibly vitiated by the imperial context in which it was written, combining 'the undefined but implicit "Orientalism" of the fourth century Greek literature and the prevalent mental attitudes of Europe-centrism in the 19th century', collapsing all 'Oriental' peoples into one 'type of being that had very definite characteristics and had maintained these characteristics with only slight modifications through history'.²¹

Henry Rawlinson, once lionized as the 'father of Assyriology',²² has more recently been characterized in similar terms, as representing the 'dominant [Eurocentric] attitude in his country and his time: "Culture" is Europe, all other traditions must be measured against it and will invariably fail'.²³ If he stands out, according to this notably uncharitable appraisal, it is for the 'unusually strong' or naive nature of his views. He appears indeed to have cut an out-of-date figure even in his own lifetime. One obituarist noted that 'strangers ... found him strangely imperious and gruffly abrupt in manner, after the old Anglo-Indian style'.²⁴ His anxiety (and that of his brother) to establish and maintain his priority in discoveries over others may well have had the ironic effect of damaging his reputation;²⁵ despite a recent popular biography, it is fair to say that he has not received a treatment that adequately reflects the range (and inter-relationship) of his interests.²⁶

This is not the place for any such systematic study. Instead, this chapter sets out to offer a preliminary glimpse of one aspect of the brothers' common legacy: their engagement with ancient and modern geography and ethnography. Far from fitting a stereotyped image of the Eurocentric scholar, cleaving close to Greek narratives, casting ancient and modern Orientals in a single, decadent mould, their positions will be revealed instead as much more textured, reflecting both their varying motives and concerns and the immensely complex intellectual background against which they were operating.²⁷

Exploring virgin fields

We begin, first, with the analogy drawn between Henry Rawlinson's cuneiform discoveries (or George's more sedentary researches) and exploration. Such analogies form a repeated motif. In a striking phrase in his memoir, George writes of his brother's work at Bisitun in 1836–37 that he was 'bent on acquiring complete possession of the rich mine of material which the "Great Inscription" offered, and in which he saw a virgin field untouched by any other explorer'.²⁸ As he wrote to Henry Layard (in seeking to make amends for disparaging remarks he had made on the artistic value of the Nineveh reliefs), he must 'remember that every slab and every fresh bit of writing ... is so much new land rescued from the ocean of time'.²⁹ In a similar vein, George

Rawlinson describes the scriptural genealogies of Genesis, which were his own object of study, as 'like an arid range of bare and stony mountains, which, when minutely examined, reveals ... mines of emerald or diamond'.³⁰

What, if anything, is at stake in such language? Clearly, such analogies reflect the atmosphere of a time in which European nations scrambled for 'priority in discovery' of past as well as present lands and cultures – and for priority in displaying their finds in publications and exhibitions.³¹ From the period of his first spell in Persia in the 1830s, Henry Rawlinson threw himself into geographical exploration, the clear context for which was the defence of Britain's possessions in India from the threat of other Great Powers, notably Russia. (Throughout his life, according to George, '[he] took every opportunity that presented itself to him of advancing geographical knowledge', and was always ready 'to apply his geographical knowledge to practical objects'.³²) Similarly, notwithstanding his wide correspondence with others engaged in cuneiform work from across Europe, the race for decipherment was clearly conceived as having a national dimension.³³ Henry Rawlinson's notes towards an 'Article on cuneiform' begin by observing the 'Apathy of England in Oriental Literature, compared with ... Germany'.³⁴ In his correspondence from Baghdad, the Irishness of his main cuneiform rival, Edward Hincks, is dwelled upon, as is the alleged 'anti-English' feeling of Oppert, initially described as a great savant in the making before an inevitable falling-out.³⁵ On hearing of a planned French commission, with instructions to take possession of and excavate a number of sites, Rawlinson declares that he would 'have their throats cut by the Arabs ... if they really have the assurance thus to come poaching on my preserve'.³⁶

It seems likely, however, that Henry Rawlinson was motivated to a much greater extent by a perceived right of personal 'seignorage' than any sense of national competition for honour. 'I looked on these tablets as a sort of game preserve – and Hincks I maintain to be a most unscrupulous poacher'.³⁷ Critical here is a balanced assessment of Henry Rawlinson's personality. In one recent portrait, Rawlinson has been characterized as 'composed, cool, gifted', a figure so apparently austere that he was only able to relate emotionally to his pet lion.³⁸ One contemporary indeed noted his 'rather haughty' manner, but significantly this was a first impression, belied almost immediately by his warmth.³⁹ To judge from a later account of his youthful exploits that Rawlinson wrote for his children (1870–1), it seems likely that he was able to relate warmly to his family as well as to animals – at least on the level of 'derring-do' and of eccentric tales of the attempted skinning of an iguana.⁴⁰ At the same time, however – very far from being cool or composed – Rawlinson was tempestuous, sensitive to any perceived slights, and prone to a good deal of (disingenuous or self-deceiving) posturing.⁴¹

From the time of his first arrival in Bombay at the age of 17, Henry Rawlinson was acutely sensitive of the need to advance by whatever route, veering from dreams of wealth and glory to protestations of their vanity.⁴² Fearful of a court-martial for the latest in a series of drunken excesses, he confided in his diary the determination to enter the King of Persia's service and 'make some figure in the world there': 'India is too narrow a field for my ambition – everything here goes by interest and it is impossible to get into notices unless patronized by some of the *Grande*es. I cannot bear the idea of creeping unknown through the world'.⁴³ The young cadet's search for glory took a number of paths, many of which proved dead ends: feats of horsemanship;⁴⁴

the writing of Byronic verses published in the *Bombay Courier* (but of which he was coy about admitting authorship);⁴⁵ writing a play; and acting – an experience which (due to his inadequate learning of his lines) quickly ‘sickened [him] of Play acting any more.’⁴⁶ This pattern of restless unsatisfied ambition remained a constant for much of his career. Loaded with honours, he would list them, before noting their meaninglessness, or asserting hollowly that he had ‘no longer the energy of youth nor the stimulus of having to earn a reputation.’⁴⁷

Against this background, Henry’s cuneiform work appears arguably in a different light: not as a turning of his back on hope of worldly preferment (or, as his brother had it, a reflection of his growing ‘weary of governing half-civilised Orientals’⁴⁸) but, on the contrary, as one of a number of means by which he might make his mark. When he reviewed his life to date in a journal entry in 1847, he veered between declaring his ambition to become ambassador to Persia, the conviction that ambition ‘must not be sought in politics, but in letters’, and the reflection that though ‘doubtless ambition is the mainspring of my life ... yet in many moods I feel its emptiness.’⁴⁹ Around the time of his return to Britain in 1849, a common theme in his correspondence is his desire to shun society and pursue his ‘work at Antiquities’: to ‘take a small house somewhere in the suburbs, fill it with books and keep as much as possible out of society and public life’, to ‘forswear politics and society and settle down into a retired hard working Savant ... clear of the smoke but near enough to be “*en rapport*” with the Museum and Asiatic Society.’⁵⁰ Likewise, in 1855, he laid plans for an exhibition of antiquities at the Royal Asiatic’s AGM, but simultaneously enjoined the Society’s Secretary, Edwin Norris, to ‘Please avoid all trumpeting ... for I am dead sick of humbug and would rather take service with Barnum, or Wombwell [circuses] than exhibit any more for the edification of the would-be savants of London.’⁵¹ As his brother’s characterization of his lack of patience may suggest, however, this projected ideal of a life of isolated study was something of a front: a form of self-protection, we may speculate, in case society did not fully appreciate his achievements. In practice, he feasted on the widespread adulation he subsequently received after his first return to London.⁵² But when offered political preferments, as in the case of his second appointment to the Council of India, he allowed his linguistic work to ‘[sink] into secondary position.’⁵³

As a consequence of this brittle concern for his own advancement and reputation, just as in his geographical explorations he might claim priority in being the first European to discover a route from Kermanshah to Baghdad,⁵⁴ or just as in his military-diplomatic career he cast himself as endlessly ‘counteracting [the] intrigues’ of ‘infernal Russians’,⁵⁵ so in his cuneiform discovery, rather than contenting himself with ‘gaining ground step by step’,⁵⁶ he saw himself in intense competition for priority with a whole series of infernal ‘savants’. Moreover, the priority that he sought was not a single prize: if cuneiform discovery were a continent, every small landmark in its exploration was eagerly claimed.⁵⁷ Rawlinson was concerned to show that he had gained primacy in small items of orthography or chronology, particular readings or translations, beseeching Edwin Norris to make an oral presentation of his findings to the Royal Asiatic Society to establish his claim, or to avoid mentioning it to his main rival, Dr Edward Hincks, ‘as he would probably claim it before the Savans of Dublin as his own discovery.’⁵⁸

The uses of ethnography

Just as the expansion of geographical knowledge was a recurrent concern for Henry Rawlinson, so from almost the outset of his military-diplomatic career, he was concerned with (what we might term) the application of ethnographic knowledge. From his first arrival in India, he was studying both Hindustani and Mahratta (that 'monster of monsters', as he called it)⁵⁹ for qualification as a regimental interpreter. At first attempt, after much self-reproach at his lack of progress, and pressure from his Moonshee to 'fagg' harder, he indeed failed – on the grounds, not so much of his language skills, as that he needed longer to acclimatize: 'I had not been sufficiently long in the country to pick up some of the lowest idioms and to make myself so thoroughly acquainted with the manners of the natives as to be qualified for an Interpreter.'⁶⁰

Expertise in foreign customs – whether of a particular 'race' or faith, or of 'the East' in general – was thenceforth his stock-in-trade. During the Afghan War, for example, he disputed with the commander of Kandahar (where he held the post of Political Agent) the wisdom of making a proclamation offering a reward for two men, telling General Nott that 'whatever may be the secret feelings of Mohammedans regarding betrayal or assassination, it is altogether repugnant to their habits to avow such objects in a public proclamation'⁶¹ Any such cultural sensitivity, of course, supports British interests, as is graphically revealed in his 1841 report on the 'Dooranee' tribes of Afghanistan. As he opens his report, addressed to Sir William Hay Macnaghten, any such 'information as [he] possess[es] relative to the past and present condition of the Dooranee tribes' is designed to inform 'the best system of government which it may be prudent and practicable to pursue in their future management'.⁶² In his subsequent political career, in 1879, he deployed his (nearly 40-year-old) knowledge of Afghanistan to warn that 'with such a people as the Affghans [sic], it was necessary to be always upon one's guard, and that little dependence was to be placed on promises, or even on solemnly signed treaties, especially when there was a tempter at hand [i.e. Russia]'.⁶³

Despite this clear subordination of ethnography to imperial ends, we can trace some changes in his perspective. The journal of his first months in India shows something of a metamorphosis: from a young man who blithely arouses the indignation of some villagers, by shooting some 'pariah dogs' and then 'passing in triumphant and independent manner through the rest of their dominions', to someone who 'gets on famously' with a man from Kandahar on his third Haj, and who draws from his encounter the conclusion that non-Christian beliefs are sincerely, fervently held.⁶⁴ By the time of his (two-part) parliamentary career, we can detect an increasing confidence in his 'speaking for' other peoples: in his characterizing Indian views on the relative merits of rule by the East India Company and the Crown, defending the Indian princely states as a way to 'conciliate Native feeling', or in warning of the effect of 'inflicting undue severity on the Indians' in the light of the 1857 'Mutiny', a severity 'not only un-English and unchristian, but ... also highly impolitic'.⁶⁵ A later memorandum on the reorganization of the Western and North-Western Frontiers of India similarly recommended that the Government of India desist from its 'distant and haughty attitude' to the border tribes in favour of developing a community of interest between them and the British.⁶⁶

I do not, be it observed, speak as a mere theorist or humanitarian. I had three years' practical experience of the Afghans, being brought into personal communication with all classes of the people and under all possible circumstances, and I am satisfied that there is no Asiatic nation more amenable to the influence of kindly treatment, or, in fact, more easily managed, when due allowance is made for their prejudices, and especially for their wild love of personal liberty.

A consistent theme, however – one which trumps his focus on ethnographic particularity – is his emphasis on the importance of 'prestige', in other words the practical imperative of projecting an image of your power. As early as his first stay in Persia, when he was working for the Shah's brother in Kermanshah raising regiments from Kurdish tribes, he was developing his own principles of conduct:⁶⁷

Create business for yourself. Lose no opportunity of making yourself useful, whatever may be the affair which may happen to present the chance. Grasp at everything, and never yield an inch. Above all, never stand upon trifles. Be careful of outward appearances. Maintain a good establishment; keep good horses and showy ones; dress well; have good and handsome arms; in your conversation and intercourse with the natives, be sure to observe the customary etiquette.

This was also the theme of perhaps his most compelling parliamentary speech, one singled out by his brother, and which evidently also had an impact on the broader contemporary debate: his passionate intervention in support of the 1867 military expedition to Abyssinia to liberate the British envoy and others held hostage by King Theodore (or Tewedros) II.⁶⁸ This was, he insisted again, not for him a theoretical question, but one on which he drew on nearly 30 years' employment in the East:⁶⁹

I would say, then, that I look on 'prestige' in politics much as I look on credit in finance. It is a power which enables us to achieve very great results with very small means at our disposal. 'Prestige' may not be of paramount importance in Europe, but in the East, Sir, our whole position depends upon it. It is a perfect fallacy to suppose that we hold India by the sword. The foundation of our tenure, the talisman – so to speak – which enables 100,000 Englishmen to hold 150,000,000 of natives in subjection, is the belief in our unassailable power, in our inexhaustible resources; and any circumstance, therefore, which impairs that belief, which leads the nations of the East to mistrust our superiority, and to regard us as more nearly on an equality with themselves, inflicts a grievous shock on our political position.

In the face of the imperatives of maintaining prestige, of projecting an image of British superiority, the complex differences between foreign peoples collapse.⁷⁰ And the difficulties presented by geography are likewise eclipsed. Rawlinson lays out in expert fashion his researches into the climate and resources of Abyssinia, but, given the implications of inaction (in particular on the 'Native mind' in India), and the benefits of (careful) intervention, no geographical obstacles should be allowed to stand in the way: intervention 'would redound to the credit of our arms, increase our political prestige, and give us the proud satisfaction of knowing that we had done our duty, and done it thoroughly, as one of the great nations of the world appointed to watch over the interests of civilization.'⁷¹

When Rawlinson's concern for prestige led to his resigning his post as 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary' to the court of the Shah, again it was a decision based on only the most broad-brush characterization of the 'East'. The issue over which he resigned his post was the transfer of Persia from the India Office to the Foreign Office: if Foreign Office diplomats who 'had passed their lives at European Courts, and in the study and practice of European methods' were to take the place of India Office officials, their 'ignorance of Oriental manners and ideas must ... lead to continual misunderstandings and difficulties'.⁷²

The 'unchangingness' of the East

If for Henry Rawlinson a focus on ethnographic particularity (grounded in experience) is in tension with a generalizing idea of the Orient (driven by a kind of economy of prestige), George Rawlinson arguably takes on the latter without the former. Indeed, of the two brothers, it might be said that it is George who, both in describing his brother's career and in the context of ancient peoples, adopts the more stridently Orientalist tone. Of his brother's experiences of raising taxes in Kandahar, for example, he writes that 'the subjects of an Oriental State, however governed, are subject to the weakness which had been called "an ignorant impatience of taxation"'.⁷³ The attributes that fitted Henry Layard to the task of excavation doubled for other purposes: he was, wrote the sedentary George Rawlinson, 'a man excellently fitted for the work of an explorer and excavator, strong, robust, determined, able to exert a powerful influence over Orientals, and calculated to compel obedience from them; active, energetic, and inured to hardship by his previous travels in wide regions'.⁷⁴

For both brothers, there are powerful elements of continuity from the ancient to the contemporary world: as Sancisi-Weerdenburg pointed out, the Orient and the Oriental are powerful categories across time.⁷⁵ Continuity is expressed, for example, in physical form in Henry's notebooks, in the varied content of his early geographical memoirs, or in the organizing principles of George's *Oriental Monarchies*. Henry's notebooks, for example, shift effortlessly from transcriptions of Bisitun or notes on Grotefend to practical issues of geography.⁷⁶ His early geographical memoirs combine geographical landmarks and markedly Herodotean ethnography with tips for travellers to Kurdistan and updates on knowledge of antiquities.⁷⁷ Each of George Rawlinson's *Oriental Monarchies* surveys the geography, climate, customs, achievements and history of the monarchy in question in systematic sequence – a structure which is both indebted to and which trumps Herodotus' ethnographies – peppering each account with passing descriptions ('The reptiles of Persia Proper are not numerous', for example) that seem to assume continuity.⁷⁸

This wide chronological perspective – coupled with a general presumption of the 'unchangingness of all things human in the East'⁷⁹ – allows for the tracing of strong historical patterns across time, in particular for analogies between the Achaemenids, on the one hand, and the contemporary monarchies of Qajar Persia or Ottoman Turkey on the other. Against this unchanging backdrop, for example, a regular pattern (according to George Rawlinson) is that 'a conqueror rapidly overruns an enormous

tract of territory, inhabited by many and diverse nations, overpowers their resistance or receives their submission, and imposes upon them a system of government, rude and inartificial indeed, but sufficient ordinarily to maintain their subjection, till the time comes when a fresh irruption and a fresh conqueror repeat the process, which seems to be the only renovation whereof Oriental realms are capable.⁷⁸⁰ But such renovation has no significant impact on the new empire's subjects. 'The nations retain their languages, habits, manners, religion, laws, and sometimes even their native princes.'⁷⁸¹ Similarly, Herodotus' description of ancient Persian customs prompts a series of contemporary parallels (from both brothers): between the rituals of the Magi and the 'Ali Allahis' or Shiites (on Hdt. 1.132); between the 'bon vivants' of Persia ancient and modern (Hdt. 1.133); or between the Persian punishment of cutting off noses and ears as a punishment and the 'infliction [of this mode of punishment] by the revolted Sepoys on our own countrymen and countrywomen in 1857' (on Hdt. 3.138) – a parallel which 'will occur to all readers.'⁷⁸²

This wide perspective also allows for contemporary (that is, nineteenth-century) experience to be drawn on to elucidate ancient evidence: for the present to illustrate the past.⁷⁸³ In his note, for example, on Herodotus' observation on the manner in which kissing between Persian men relates to their respective statuses (1.134), Henry Rawlinson observes the importance of similar etiquette in contemporary Persia: 'With regard to the method of salutation, the extreme limits are, as Herodotus observes, the mutual embrace (the kiss is now invariably given on the cheek), and prostration on the ground; but there are also several intermediate forms, which he has not thought it worth while to notice, of obeisance, kissing hands, &c., by which an experienced observer learns the exact relation of the parties.'⁷⁸⁴ Likewise, in his early 'Memoir on Atropatenian Ecbatana', he hypothesizes the route taken by a Roman army on the basis of a casual inquiry from an Afshar chief, 'how he would march if suddenly ordered to Tabriz?'.⁷⁸⁵ This pattern of drawing insights into the more ancient from the more recent past (or present) is one indeed which Rawlinson develops in his memoir on Atropatenian Ecbatana into his overarching methodology, deliberately moving backwards in time from the 'verification of the ruins of Takhti-Soleiman in Oriental geography' through the Arab, Byzantine, Roman and Greek periods, 'thus finally to arrive at the dark period of the Median dynasty, where fable is intermixed with history, and glimmerings of truth can only be elicited by careful and minute analysis'.⁷⁸⁶

And this line of argument, if less agreeable in character, is at any rate more consonant with the true principles of critical inquiry than the course which is usually adopted, of following down the stream of time from antiquity to modern days; for in the one case we commence our reasonings in doubt and darkness; we can determine no precise point of history to support our further disquisitions; and thus, when we at last descend to the more tangible field of certain and direct elaboration, our inferences are still affected by the obscurity of our early researches; whilst in the other we set out from a fixed base of direct and well-established proof. We build a superstructure upon this foundation; and as we gradually ascend the chain of evidence into the field of more remote inquiry, criticism may, at any point, withhold assent to our opinions, without at all endangering the stability of any part of the preceding argument.

Finally, this wide perspective allows for lessons to be drawn – more or less explicitly – from antiquity for the present day. ‘The Oriental will generally kiss the hand that smites him, if it only smite him hard enough,’ observes George Rawlinson of Cambyses’ (entirely sane) harshness as king.⁸⁷ Likewise he is clearly aligning himself with his brother Henry’s most long and trenchantly held political position – his alertness to the threat to British interests posed by Russia⁸⁸ – in his assertion that the (ancient) ‘Persians knew, what the great nations of the earth afterwards forgot, that along the northern horizon there lay a black cloud, which might at any time burst, carrying desolation to their homes and bringing ruin upon their civilization.’⁸⁹

It would be wrong to assume, however, that continuity from ancient to modern worlds was an automatic or lazily held position. The business, for example, of fixing the geographical position of ancient sites was one on which Henry Rawlinson exhausted vast labour and indulged in highly rhetorical polemic, trumping armchair geographers with his knowledge of geographical realia and, occasionally with the views of Orientals (‘whose authority is entitled to some credit’).⁹⁰ As George Rawlinson makes clear in his memoir on his brother (but clearly with an eye to his own work), ‘Comparative Geography’ was an important discipline in its own right, ‘one of the most important handmaids of history.’⁹¹ Comparative Geography, in his words, seeks to ‘reconcile to the natural and necessary conclusions of modern experience the obscure, ambiguous, and often contradictory records of modern writers, historical and other, to identify ancient with modern sites, and so to give a life and reality to the old narratives, in which they would otherwise be lamentably deficient.’ Far from casually assuming continuity in conditions, both brothers were wrestling to make sense of ancient evidence and modern experience in relation to each other.

Similarly with ethnographic traits, whether or not the Rawlinsons saw what they wanted to see (i.e. ancient traits, as recorded by Greek authors) in the modern world, continuity is nonetheless something which is observed, rather than merely assumed.⁹² The (apparent) resemblance between the Persians of ancient (Greek) authors and of the contemporary world is adduced as evidence of the accuracy of ancient representations, with ancient authors on Persia aligned with modern visitors such as John Chardin or James Justinian Morier:⁹³

Brave, lively, spirited, capable of sharp sayings and repartees, but vain, weak, impulsive, and hopelessly servile towards their lords, the ancient Persians stand out in his [Herodotus] pages as completely depicted by a few masterly strokes as their modern descendants have been by the many touches of a Morier or a Chardin. Clearly marked out from other barbarian races by a lightness and sprightliness of character, which brought them near to the Hellenic type, yet vividly contrasted with the Greeks by their passionate *abandon* and slavish submission to the caprices of despotic power, they possess in the pages of Herodotus an individuality which is a guarantee of truth, and which serves very remarkably to connect them with that peculiar Oriental people – the ‘Frenchmen of the East,’ as they have been called – at present inhabiting their country. Active, vivacious, intelligent, sparkling, even graceful, but without pride or dignity, supple, sycophantic, always either tyrant or slave, the modern Persian contrasts strongly with the other races

of the East, who are either rude, bold, proud, and freedom-loving, like the Kurds and Affghans, or listless and apathetic, like the Hindoos. This curious continuity of character, which however is not without parallel [a footnote cites the Greeks, Germans and Spaniards], very strongly confirms the truthfulness of our author, who is thus shown, even in what might seem to be the mere ornamental portion of his work, to have confined himself to a representation of actual realities.

At the same time, unchanging continuity in the character of ancient and modern peoples is by no means a uniform rule. There is, first, at least the theoretical possibility of an evolution from primitive to more advanced civilization. So, for example, Henry Rawlinson's report on the state of Georgia allows for the possibility of a creeping process of development even as he portrays the Georgians as cheerfully emasculated by Russian power:⁹⁴ 'Lightly taxed, they reside in smiling villages, and enjoy their kakhetti wine undisturbed by political hopes or fears, and advancing perhaps, gradually but slowly, in the path of civilization.' Unlike, however, the model of development towards civilization of E. B. Tylor, for example, for whom similarly 'the past is ... needed to explain the present, and the whole [of the growth of civilization] to explain the part', but for whom differences between civilizations were 'rather differences of development than of origin, rather of degree than of kind',⁹⁵ there is little suggestion here of forward movement, more a sense of a distinction between societies which were alternatively progressive or arrested in their development.⁹⁶ There is also, moreover, a parallel possibility of degeneration, one strikingly illustrated by the comparison of ancient and modern monarchs. A young Henry Rawlinson's account of an audience with Fath Ali Shah delights in contrasting the grand setting with the king's ludicrous appearance.⁹⁷ By contrast, the best of ancient monarchs set themselves apart from their subjects (whether by their initiative or by their business-like administration – and so are implicitly aligned with the British. An ordinary Oriental, according to George Rawlinson, 'would have been content with [merely becoming king], and have declined to tempt fortune any more. But Cyrus was no ordinary Oriental'.⁹⁸

The possibility of an even more striking discontinuity is also raised: that the modern and ancient Persians were not recognizably of the same 'ethnic stock'. Against the evidence of ancient Persian physiognomy that he detects in the Persepolis reliefs,⁹⁹

the modern Persian is a very degenerate representative of the ancient Arian stock. Fourteen centuries of subjection to despotic sway have left their stamp upon his countenance and his frame, which, though still retaining some traces of the original type, have been sadly weakened and lowered by so long a term of subservience. Probably the wild Kurd or Lur of the present day more nearly corresponds to the ancient Mede than do the softer inhabitants of the great plateau.

Such observations of ethnic 'degeneration', moreover, are not isolated but form part of an evolutionary model of ethnology which became fundamental to both brothers' work.¹⁰⁰ The first volume of Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, for example, includes a lengthy essay on the 'ethnic affinities' of the people of Asia Minor, which seeks to classify all peoples mentioned in the *Histories* in terms of their 'ethnic character', assigning them a place in a family tree of races which is ultimately then tabulated.¹⁰¹ The same concern,

of ethnic classification, animates lengthy commentary notes (by both brothers, and by their third collaborator, Gardner Wilkinson): on the Colchians and Egyptians as Cushite, for example, the Lydians or Chaldeans as Semitic, or the 'Caucasian stock' of the Egyptians.¹⁰²

The Rawlinsons' ethnology is predicated both on an implicit hierarchy of ethnological 'stocks' and on a developmental schema. For George Rawlinson, for example, in his essay on ethnic affinities, the close relationship between Medes and Persians makes 'natural' sense in the light of their being the 'two pre-eminent branches of the Arian stock'.¹⁰³ Drawing on Herodotus' description of the thinness of Persian skulls, he suggests, in a later work, that thin skulls reflect a large brain-cavity, in turn 'generally a concomitant of intellectual power'.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, he makes clear that Turanian is 'rather a stage than a form of language'.¹⁰⁵ The Rawlinsons' ethnological model of history is only sustainable, however, on the basis of a high degree of vagueness and flux. Peoples, as we have seen, can change character: so, for example, the Babylonians become 'Semitized' (though George Rawlinson concedes that 'no doubt there were differences which a Hippocrates or an Aristotle could have detected').¹⁰⁶ Crucially, also, evidence that goes against the grain of an ethnic classification may point to remnants of other traits, so confirming the underlying thesis. So, for example, the 'barbaric magnificence' of Babylonian architecture can be explained in terms of the 'African spirit', 'which loves gaudy hues and costly ornament ... still strong among the Babylonians, even after they had been Semitized'.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in his account of the largely changeless and passive state of Georgia, Henry Rawlinson isolates one exception – 'the solitary artificial civilization of Tiflis ... a strange compound of European luxury and Asiatic squalor' – so maintaining the overarching distinction between European and Asiatic, and explaining why this pocket of civilization had 'no sensible effect on the population, further than in debauching the Georgian nobles and emasculating the national spirit'.¹⁰⁸

Ethnology and scripture

The motives, and the intellectual contexts, for the two brothers' shared concern with ethnology – born out of a chaos of conflicting hypotheses of human origins¹⁰⁹ – were markedly different. A passing mention in a letter suggests that Henry Rawlinson was influenced by a reading of Gobineau's *Sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853–55); this was a work, he noted, 'full of interest and well worth reading'.¹¹⁰ More broadly, he was concerned above all to make sense of the new ancient world he was helping to uncover, matching it with the world of his own experience, and grasping at any passing tool. For George, by contrast, the concern with ethnology was rooted, above all, in debates on the historical veracity of scripture. As he wrote:

One modern view of Biblical Inspiration is to the effect, that while the writers of Scripture are to be held as infallible guides in whatever relates to religion and morality, in all other matters they are to be considered as simply on a par with other men, equally limited in their knowledge, equally liable to error, not a whit

superior to their contemporaries, or in advance of their age. The accordance of the ethnology of Genesis with the latest results of ethnographical science, seems to the present author to deal a rude blow to such a theory ... [If] in the material world God has wrought every minutest part to a finish and a perfection the highest that it is possible to conceive, much more is it to be believed that, in the far more important treasure of His Word, He has left nothing incomplete, but has given every jot and tittle His full care, the utmost perfection of which it was capable, so that the whole is designed, and is the utterance to man of Absolute Wisdom.¹¹¹

In his war to 'to check the spread of unbelief' and to confound those who denied the veracity of Scripture, George's familiarity with cuneiform discovery came to constitute a secret weapon. It is possible that he did not always see this potential. In an 1847 letter to Layard, Henry Rawlinson suggests that George was in favour of abandoning research into cuneiform because of the dangers it posed:¹¹²

They write me from England that Assyrian antiquities were exciting great interest and that the Clergy had got perfectly alarmed at the idea of there being contemporary annals whereby to test the credibility of Jewish history. A brother indeed of mine, a Fellow of Exeter College & joint Editor of the 'Oxford Magazine' protests most vehemently against the further prosecution of the enquiry. Did you ever hear such downright *rot*?

However, if George Rawlinson did indeed feel an initial disquiet, he quickly accommodated himself to the opportunity that his brother's work presented.¹¹³ 'Circumstances have given him,' he wrote of himself in 1869, 'an intimate knowledge of the whole course of recent cuneiform, and (to some extent) of hieroglyphical discovery ... he has been continually struck with the removal of difficulties, the accession of light, and the multiplication of minute points of agreement between the sacred and the profane, which resulted from the advances made in deciphering the Assyrian, Persian and Egyptian records.'¹¹⁴ On the basis of his wide researches into ancient cultures, citing his brother, Max Müller and others in his own support, and in polemical response to works (such as Rowland Williams' contribution to *Essays and Reviews* or Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*) with a much longer schema of development from 'savagery to civilization',¹¹⁵ Rawlinson became a stalwart defender of the 'juvenility of man': 'authentic sources' for the history of man only reached back to the mid-third millennium BC; at the same time, there was no evidence at all for a developmental stage of 'primeval savagery',¹¹⁶ since the Egyptian cultures of the mid-third millennium were not in fact so advanced (with the Egyptians' prime skill being that of cutting and polishing stone), it was possible finally to posit a period of 'incubation' of 'at the utmost' no more than one thousand years for human civilization to reach that point.¹¹⁷

This difference in religious outlook was perhaps the crucial one between the two brothers. In the direct words of an obituarist, '[George] Rawlinson throughout believed that the chief purpose of Assyriology and Egyptology was to prove the literal truth of scripture, and all his writings are coloured by this belief.'¹¹⁸ In maintaining – and indeed developing – his approach, it is tempting from a modern vantage point to suppose that Rawlinson was an increasingly beleaguered and reactionary figure.¹¹⁹

But though some may have seen the emerging evidence of the monuments as necessarily in conflict with the accounts of Scripture,¹²⁰ this was by no means the universal presumption. Balanced voices, such as Benjamin Jowett's in *Essays and Reviews*, questioned whether it was in fact harmful to 'rest truths important to human life on the mere accident of an archaeological discovery'; the importance of historical inquiries for Jowett was not 'that they impugn or confirm the Jewish history, but that they show more clearly the purposes of God towards the whole human race'.¹²¹ Perhaps the majority position, however, sought to find confirmation in archaeology of biblical narratives. Soon after the decipherment, for example, before there was a wider acknowledgement of the difficulty of reading the inscriptions, the evidence of Assyriology was cited by no less a figure than Pusey in his commentary on the *Minor Prophets*.¹²² Layard seems to have envisaged 'the connexion of the inscriptions and sculpture with Biblical History' as making the likely reception of his work on Nineveh a more positive one.¹²³ The close correspondence of cuneiform evidence with biblical history provided a basis indeed for later scepticism over the reliability of the decipherment.¹²⁴ Later in the century, the evidence of archaeology had, if anything, gained in power as a defence against biblical criticism, with A. H. Sayce, with magnificent bravado, casting his own position as progressive, that of the critics as close-minded. The position of the 'higher critic' was akin, Sayce argued, to the 'anti-scientific attitude of those who condemned Galileo'; biblical criticism was based on the assumption that biblical writers 'had lived in an age of newspapers and reviews'.¹²⁵ Oriental archaeology then offered a corrective to this inability to grasp 'the vital difference that exists between the Oriental and the European world'.¹²⁶ By comparison with the 'contrary pen' of Sayce,¹²⁷ George Rawlinson's opposition to biblical criticism was framed perhaps in more straightforwardly conservative terms: 'Facts are stubborn things, and rightly command our respect; hypotheses are airy nothings, and may safely be disregarded and despised.' His position, however, was in no sense an eccentric or a reactionary one in context.¹²⁸

By contrast to George, Henry Rawlinson seems to have taken delight in confounding scriptural authority, or '[making] demands of the Bishops', as he put it.¹²⁹ 'I shall not be deterred from proceeding ... not indeed if the authenticity of Daniel itself should be endangered by the enquiry.' '[I am] still marvelling at the strange mixture of fact and fiction to be found in the Historical Books of Scripture and debating whether it be worth my while to separate the wheat from the chaff – I fear in that case there would hardly be enough ... left to make a decent loaf.'¹³⁰ It is quite possible that Henry Rawlinson is overdramatizing his scholarly situation, exaggerating the outrage felt by divines, and casting his brother unfairly (in the letter quoted above) as just another ignorant clergyman. In a letter to Layard of 1850, after referring rather boastfully to an hour-long conversation about Nineveh and Babylon he had had with the Queen over dinner at Buckingham Palace, he recounts how he had 'discussed the probable spuriousness of a great portion of Daniel, with several members of the Bench of Bishops without scandalizing them'.¹³¹ He refers to a party 'who try to make chronology fit into scripture', but at the same time expresses surprise at the 'degree of religious freedom' he had discovered for his work.¹³² At the same time, beyond the bluster of his private correspondence, he may in practice have pulled his punches – whether because of his

brother's position in the Church,¹³³ or, more likely perhaps, out of a default concern for outward respectability.

For his part also, George Rawlinson downplayed this difference from his brother with euphemism. 'Having studied profoundly the many religions of Asia and Europe, ancient and modern, his views were the reverse of dogmatic.'¹³⁴ Henry Rawlinson's experience of the 'East' clearly broadened his imagination in relation to foreign peoples and weakened his faith, a process that one can see occurring almost in real time in his early journals. Observing a Hindu man dashing to the ground an earthenware jar from which he had drunk as polluted, the teenager wrote: 'this bigotry must surely cease some time – the whole world is to be converted to Christianity – but really when you hear the implicit faith that the Musselman reposes in Mohammad and the Koran and the Hindo in Brahmah and the Shustra [?] the miracle appears totally inconceivable.'¹³⁵ The same intellectual manoeuvre – of subscribing to a Christian-centric perspective before discarding it – can be traced in his account of his discussion with the Muhajir from Kandahar: 'One is apt,' he writes, 'to doubt the sincerity of these fervent enthusiasms and ascribe the difficulties they voluntarily undergo and extreme pains they suffer to a love of worldly honour and celebrity [rather] than to a sense of true piety and religion.' But this would be wrong: 'we cannot but suppose their enthusiasm to spring from a deep tho['] mistaken honour for the Deity'.¹³⁶ In the same journal, Rawlinson had earlier digressed on the dangers of engaging in metaphysical reflections: if once you 'have your belief in the Christian Religion shaken, it requires a most gigantic mind to combat the arguments of Infidelity and impress your original belief firmly on your own mind'.¹³⁷ As his initial pattern-book views of the Orient became destabilized, a good deal of his early religious convictions likewise crumbled away.¹³⁸

By contrast to Henry – and to the growing number of contemporary studies that, regardless of their theological perspective, reflected a sympathy for non-Christian religion¹³⁹ – George Rawlinson's forays into comparative religion suggest the position that Christianity's relationship with divine revelation was an exclusive one. Though there may be 'good and bad men of all religions,' he maintains (drawing, in so doing, on the recent experience of the Indian Mutiny), the position that the 'same degrees of goodness and badness exist in each [religion]' is entirely false.¹⁴⁰

We cannot count the good and bad of each religion ... What, however, we can do is to judge, as we judge of the superior intelligence of a race or nation, by the general results seen upon the surface of society, in manners, customs, institutions, tone of thought and speech, practices forbidden and allowed, and the like. On all these various points recent events have given to our spurious liberality a rude shock. The closer insight obtained during the late war in to the state of morality among the Turks, dispelled an illusion which many writers had fostered, that there was not much difference of moral tone between a Christian and a Mahometan. And now, the calamities which have befallen us in the East are rapidly opening our eyes to the true character of Oriental heathenism. The mild and gentle Hindoo, so soft in speech, so courteous, so deferential, so patient, so blameless in his life, has suddenly shown the ferocity of the tiger, combined with a treachery and a malignity only seen among the worst men.

Just as ethnographic differences collapse into a generalized idea of the East in the face of Henry Rawlinson's imperative of British prestige, so similarly – in the face of George Rawlinson's Christian faith – differences in customs mask a common barbarity.¹⁴¹

This barbarity (masked by superficial civilization) was one which he also projected onto the ancient world. 'Calmness is not a common Oriental virtue,' George Rawlinson wrote. In modern China and ancient Babylonia, he finds possible exceptions, but in both cases appearances are found to be misleading. Just as the gentle Hindoo transforms into a tiger, or as the 'polite Mandarin's apparent calmness drives his European protagonist to despair', so 'it may well be that the Babylonians of the sixth and seventh centuries before our era had attained to an equal power of restraining the expression of feeling. But real gentleness, meekness, and placability were certainly not the attributes of a people who were so fierce in their wars and so cruel in their punishments.'¹⁴² By a turn of argument that leaves a lot to wishful thinking, however, George Rawlinson then concludes – by contrast to his teenage brother – that Christianity's superior 'goodness' will result inevitably in its worldwide triumph.¹⁴³

None but Christians even pray for the conversion of others. None but Christians seem to desire, much less to strive, that their religion may overspread the earth. And the natural result follows, itself an additional argument in favour of Christianity being from God, that the proportion of Christians to persons of other religions is perpetually increasing, that Christianity is the only religion which is steadily progressive, and that thus, by the very law of its being, it must in time become the religion of the world.

Hellenocentrism or Eurocentrism reconsidered

When viewed in the context of the range of their different interests, the charges of Hellenocentrism or of Eurocentrism, whether laid against either of the two brothers, appear in a different light – either as somewhat banal observations or as judgements which are profoundly partial and misleading.

To take Henry Rawlinson first, there is one respect at least in which his stance on the superiority of the Greek over the Near Eastern was straightforward: that is, in his judgement on the artistic merits of the newly discovered reliefs from Nineveh. The 'general style [of the reliefs was] crude & cramped but still the curiosity of the thing is ... very great,' he wrote to Henry Layard.¹⁴⁴ This response was in part simply typical of its time and of his characteristically judgemental tone – again hardly unique – in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of particular cultures.¹⁴⁵ His response to Layard's upset at his initial response on one level unapologetically restated his critique at greater length: 'You ask by what standards I compared them. Why of course, in any abstract matter we adopt the highest standard available – and I say therefore the Elgin marbles ...'¹⁴⁶ In so far as a 'mere admirer of the beautiful' could not view the reliefs with pleasure, the Nineveh marbles were in the same position as Egyptian art. And yet this issue of the marbles' artistic merits was, for Henry Rawlinson, a sideshow:

their value consists in unfolding to us the history ... languages, arts, manners, military skill, political relations [of] one of the most illustrious nations of antiquity, and in thus filling ... an enormous blank in our knowledge of the early history of the world. Compared with this true and catholic view of value I look upon artistical skill as altogether a secondary consideration. Why quarrel with the Assyrians because they were not as far advanced in the arts of design & execution as the Greeks in the time of Pericles? We have them as they were and that is what we want.

In this larger view, as Henry Rawlinson saw it, the Nineveh reliefs, so far from being dwarfed by their classical equivalents, overshadowed them. 'I look upon the sculptures as of more value than Pompeii or Herculaneum and view every new Inscription as equal to gaining one of the lost decades of Livy.'¹⁴⁷ To draw too great a contrast then between Henry Rawlinson and Layard – 'genuinely fascinated and impressed by the Assyrians and their art, not simply as a stage on the route, but as an independent human and artistic phenomenon' – arguably makes the mistake of generalizing Rawlinson's attitude to the non-classical based on his response to art alone.¹⁴⁸ The opposite criticism indeed might be laid at Layard, as he sought to bring the Nineveh reliefs on a par in popular estimation with the best productions of the classical world, that he was narrowly concerned with aesthetic considerations.¹⁴⁹

In the period of Henry Rawlinson's most intense engagement in cuneiform discovery, he can be seen to be casting around in all directions for points of navigation.¹⁵⁰ Inevitably these include Greek sources. He looks to 'monumental sources' for confirmation of Greek narratives – Herodotus' narrative of Deioeces or Phaortes, for example, or his theories of the Egyptian origin of the Colchians; he asserts the authority of classical sources whenever he can,¹⁵¹ and is disappointed when the possibility of such confirmation is not available due to a lack of monumental sources.¹⁵² Can he really be blamed, we might ask, for attempting to use what points of reference he can find by which to navigate through such uncharted waters? As Suzanne Marchand has written, the very fact that sources such as Herodotus could now be checked against Near Eastern material was 'a novelty, and a triumph'; we should hardly be surprised if progress was 'fitful and fraught with peril';¹⁵³ or if his reconstructions resemble a hodge-podge of different influences, a muddle of etymologies and migrating peoples.¹⁵⁴ Or as F. W. Newman responded on Rawlinson's behalf, in 1865 – notwithstanding all the 'doubtful interpretations', 'unsound conjectures', or even 'moral frailties' for which Rawlinson might have been at fault – 'how are men ever to get on without guessing and feeling their way?'.¹⁵⁵

It should be emphasized, moreover, that his work reveals no uniform presumption in favour of Greek material. '[T]he more I dive into the Greeks and try to apply their names to the Inscriptions, the more puzzled I become,' Rawlinson confided to Edwin Norris.¹⁵⁶ Rawlinson was quick to appreciate the exaggerated emphasis given by Herodotus to Persian campaigns in Greece or Asia Minor, how 'with the pardonable predilections of a Greek, he neglected ... or undervalued, the detail of local wars,' praising Herodotus faintly as an 'honest, but not very critical, historian' whose evidence 'must be received with considerable caution.'¹⁵⁷ In private, his judgements

could be just as magisterially dismissive as on any other issue: 'as for the Greeks,' he wrote to Layard in 1849, 'they are mere fabulists'.¹⁵⁸

As for George Rawlinson, his work – not least his *Oriental Monarchies* – unquestionably subscribes to some of the 'Orientalist' clichés that have been subject to intense scrutiny in recent years.¹⁵⁹ He subscribes straightforwardly, for example, to the negative image of Xerxes of the Greek sources, or maintains that the danger posed to the Persian Empire by the Greeks consisted not in their military strength but their moral stature.¹⁶⁰ Persian art and architecture reveals, for George Rawlinson, as for his brother, nothing 'indicative of any remarkable artistic genius'; the Persians were (by contrast to the 'patient Babylonians' and the 'many-sided Greeks') 'too light and frivolous, too vivacious, too sensuous for such [scientific] pursuits'.¹⁶¹

At the same time, however, as we have seen, his familiarity with cuneiform is his trump card in asserting biblical veracity.¹⁶² The classical historians are consistently judged by their level of familiarity with Near Eastern monumental records: where most ancient writers 'received these representations (for the most part) diluted and distorted by passing through the medium of comparatively ignorant interpreters', Manetho and Berosus 'had free access to the national records, and so could draw their histories directly from the fountain-head'.¹⁶³ Although applauded for his 'honest intention to give [non-Greek peoples] full credit for every merit which they possessed', Herodotus is then upstaged: '[T]here is no reason to believe that [Herodotus] ever set foot in Persia Proper, or was in a country where the Arian element preponderated'.¹⁶⁴ His monolingualism rendered him unable to break into an appropriate circle of 'savants' in any city and unable to corroborate falsified annals of foreign peoples,¹⁶⁵ as a result of which his account presents 'minute and exact agreement' with monumental records alongside 'striking diversity'.¹⁶⁶ Worst of all – like his 'countrymen', but implicitly unlike his modern counterparts – he was unable to put himself imaginatively in another's place: 'Neither the lively Halicarnassian, nor the pleasant but somewhat shallow Athenian [Xenophon], had the gift of penetrating very deeply into the inner mind of a foreign people'.¹⁶⁷

To take such passages in isolation, moreover, is to ignore the larger historical canvas on which George Rawlinson is operating. On this broader canvas, every people – ancient and modern – is graded and set in relation to others. Zoroastrianism, 'of a more elevated character than is usual with races not enlightened by special revelation', marked out the Persians – who are seen as a result as having a particular affinity with the Jews.¹⁶⁸ Even the Medes and Persians 'had qualities which raised them above their fellows, and a civilisation, which was not, perhaps, very advanced, but was still not wholly contemptible'.¹⁶⁹ And the 'patient Babylonians' are credited (in the conclusion of the *Fourth Monarchy*) as the main source of inspiration for Greek intellectual life, and so for the genesis of 'real', as opposed to 'spurious', civilization – though even as he does so he downgrades the role of another ancient civilization, that of the Egyptians.¹⁷⁰

It was from the East, not from Egypt, that Greece derived her architecture, her sculpture, her science, her philosophy, her mathematic knowledge – in a word, her intellectual life. And Babylon was the source to which the entire stream of Eastern civilisation may be traced. It is scarcely too much to say that, but for Babylon,

real civilization might not even yet have dawned upon the earth. Mankind might never have advanced beyond that spurious and false form of it which in Egypt, India, China, Japan, Mexico, and Peru, contented the aspirations of the species.

All such ancient civilizations, however, are put into the shade by the power of Christian revelation. Where Christianity eradicated slavery, the ancient world built on it:¹⁷¹ 'Assyria's palaces, Babylonia's gigantic mounds, Egypt's temples and pyramids, Grecia's Cyclopean walls, Rome's amphitheatres and aqueducts, are evidences of the exaction, from vast classes of the people of an excessive and oppressive amount of labour, to which modern times affords no parallel.' By comparison to other ancient remains, it is the Roman catacombs that should be treasured: they are the 'precious remnants of an antiquity which ought to be far dearer to us than that of Greece or Pagan Rome, of Egypt, Assyria or Babylon.'¹⁷² Again, particularity in ethnographic description is elided, this time in the face of Rawlinson's Christian commitment. But pre-Christian civilizations can still furnish a moral for the modern world. The fall of the Assyrian Empire, for example, presents an example of how a society which is only advanced in material terms may self-destruct:¹⁷³

With much that was barbaric still attaching to them, with a rude and inartificial government, savage passions, a debasing religion, and a general tendency to materialism, they were towards the close of their empire, in all the arts and appliances of life, very nearly on a par with ourselves; and thus their history furnishes a warning – which the records of nations constantly repeat – that the greatest material prosperity may co-exist with the decline – and herald the downfall – of a kingdom.

For both brothers, then, to assess their achievement in the light of their ascription to a Hellenocentric or classical ideal is – no matter their training in the Classics at Ealing School – to miss what animated their work. For both brothers, ancient history was one undifferentiated field, embracing the Near East, Egypt, Israel and the classical Greek and Roman worlds. (And though ancient history may have offered a testing ground for the skills then put to use in the study of biblical history, we should not presume that the classical world was here annexing the Near Eastern.¹⁷⁴) Only on such a large historical canvas could Henry Rawlinson hope to make sense of the unruly horde of peoples that emerged from the new cuneiform sources. For George Rawlinson, on the other hand, the priority – one which led him to investigate heathen societies in the modern as well as the ancient world – was to establish systematically the superiority of his own religion.

Though both subscribed to an idea of the 'Orient', their Orient was a shifting, complex one, in which kaleidoscopic variety sat alongside universalizing generalization, and in which ancient and modern were both seamlessly continuous and fundamentally disjoined. For Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, in the vanguard of the Achaemenid History Workshop's attempt to 'decolonialize' Persian history, George Rawlinson's Orient was¹⁷⁵

a mysterious world, full of sweet perfumes, enchanting sounds, a world of sultans and harem-ladies, of intrigues and plots, of heavy jewelry, fine materials and

sophisticated food: the world of Sheherezade and 1001 nights. A world living both by night and day in closed-off interiors and turned away from light, clarity and lucidity. This Orient is thus full of secrets and magic, it lacks clarity and openness. It is essentially a sensual and feminine world, in clear contrast to our own culture where rational thinking and acting, fairness and honesty are central values.

This image of Rawlinson's Orient, however, is, to a significant extent, itself a mirage. The East was a site not just of exotic fantasy, but of personal and national ambition; a privileged source of knowledge for understanding the rise and fall of empires, the depth of human history, and the nature of divine revelation; a world which the Rawlinsons – in different ways – both distanced and appropriated, analyzed and stereotyped, as we continue to do today.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to the librarians and staff of the Royal Geographical Society (henceforth RGS) and the Royal Asiatic Society, to Roger Parsons for his detailed list of the Royal Asiatic Society (henceforth RAS) papers, to David Gange for his invaluable comments on a draft of this chapter, to the editors for their contributions and forbearance, and – not least – to Gillian Clark for the gift of George Rawlinson's *Herodotus* which prompted this study.
- 2 See here Ferrier and Dalley (2004), M. T. Larsen (1996: 330–1) for his claiming of credit for work done under his supervision, M. T. Larsen (1997) for an account of his 'unwilling and unrecognised collaboration' (pp. 355–6) with Edward Hincks; for Hincks, see also Davidson (1933); Daniels (1994: 54, making strong claims for Hincks' pre-eminent role in decipherment).
- 3 G. Rawlinson (1898: 148–50, 199); cf. letter to Edwin Norris, 22 January 1855, RAS III/12(02). A. H. Layard referred to Rawlinson (in a letter to his mother) mockingly as the 'mighty hunter', BL (= British Library) Add. MSS 58150, 39–40, 28 January 1847, cited by M. T. Larsen (1997: 346).
- 4 Bayne (2004), citing Jones (1943–4: 190); Murray (1997: 538–9).
- 5 G. Rawlinson (1898: 19).
- 6 G. Rawlinson (1898: 12; cf. 19).
- 7 *Journal of Ensign H. C. Rawlinson*, 1 December 1827–14 October 1828, RAS IV/04 (henceforth referred to as RAS IV/04), esp. i. 10–11, 15, 54, 124–5; cf. G. Rawlinson (1898: 25–6).
- 8 Bayne (2004).
- 9 G. Rawlinson (1898: 303).
- 10 G. Rawlinson (1898: 331–2); see also George Rawlinson's description of how Henry's linguistic research of the 1860s became 'irksome' to someone so accustomed to 'soldiering, drilling troops, governing unruly subjects, mapping out districts, reporting on the condition of provinces, diplomatising, discussing affairs with men of all classes and of almost all nations and languages, and continually moving from place to place'; G. Rawlinson (1898: 245–6).
- 11 Letter to Edwin Norris, date uncertain (c. 1861), RAS III/14(14). See also below for Henry's allegation that his brother discouraged him from cuneiform research;

- G. Rawlinson (1898: 161–2) for the revealing anecdote of the brothers' testing each other in a chess match.
- 12 21 March 1836, cited by G. Rawlinson (1898: 62–63). By contrast, Henry's journal complains that George 'gives me no news except Ealing [School]': RAS IV/04, ii. 48.
 - 13 Cf. Oswyn Murray (1997: 538), in the context of George's appointment to the Camden chair, that his brother's eminence was a 'great good fortune'.
 - 14 G. Rawlinson (1898: 162–3).
 - 15 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i, viii). The division of labour between brothers is perhaps misrepresented by M. T. Larsen (1996: 225), underestimating George's own contribution to 'geographical and historical commentary'.
 - 16 See here Ferrier and Dalley (2004), describing Rawlinson 1898 as 'adulatory'; for the subsequent construction of Henry's reputation (in which Budge (1925) played a crucial role), see also M. T. Larsen (1996: 330–1; 1997: 355–6); Daniels (1994: 52–3).
 - 17 Murray (1997: 539).
 - 18 Though cf. Kidd (2006: 128–32), grouping Rawlinson with those who responded to challenges to biblical authority through 'a parade of learning [obfuscating] a traditionalist reluctance to shift any ground whatsoever'.
 - 19 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987: 117, 128–31), accidentally misattributing the volume to Henry Rawlinson at p. 117.
 - 20 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987: 128), then conceding: 'At some points, Rawlinson gives preference to the Iranian evidence and discards Greek information, but the story he tells remains a Greek story, a tale of rise and decline, constructed around the *characters* of individual kings. Thus it becomes easy first to fit the autochthonous data into the already existing synthesis and secondly to continue to judge the behaviour of these Persians against the moral verdicts delivered about them by their Greek "contemporaries"'. Cf., more positively, Frye (1984: x–xi).
 - 21 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987: 129–30).
 - 22 Notably by Budge (1925).
 - 23 M. T. Larsen (1996: 212); cf. Marchand (2009: 207) for Eduard Meyer's more positive appraisal.
 - 24 Anon. (1895).
 - 25 See, e.g. Ferrier and Dalley's (2004) appraisal.
 - 26 Adkins (2003); cf. Beasley (2005) for an attempt to explore the intersection of archaeology and imperialism, contrasting Rawlinson and Northcote. Cf. here the insightful characterizations of scholarship of Marchand (2009: xx) or Gange (2006: 1085n. 4) as unhelpfully divided between, e.g. 'Orientalism literature' and heroic biographies.
 - 27 Cf. Gange's observations of Egyptologists (2006: 1084–5), emphasizing religious factors over, e.g. crude racism (by contrast esp. to Bernal (1987–2006)).
 - 28 G. Rawlinson (1898: 65–66; cf. p. 188, on Borsippa, comparatively 'a virgin field', or p. 336 on the imperative of finding virgin ground in geographical exploration). Cf. his remark about his assembly of a comparative table of the 'two alphabets', Babylonian and Persian, that 'for the first time ... I can say with safety "land is in sight"', letter to Edwin Norris, 20 September 1847, RAS III/04(17).
 - 29 BL Add. MSS 38977 25–7, 19 August 1846, cited by Waterfield (1963: 145–7); cf. his remark in a letter from Bisitun to Edwin Norris, 20 September 1847, RAS III/4(17), that 'land is in sight'.

- 30 G. Rawlinson (1878: 166); cf. Henry's use of same analogy, RGS HCR/14a 1, 21 May 1891 ('I have just sprung a new mine').
- 31 See here the observations of Waterfield (1963: 124–5); the competition between Britain and France is well brought out by M. T. Larsen (1996, e.g. 67, 77, 124).
- 32 G. Rawlinson (1898: 147, 343). His concern with the Russian threat was a recurrent and strong theme, evidenced e.g. in his anecdote of an encounter with the Russian agent Vickovich in 1837 (G. Rawlinson 1898: 67–8), or in his expressed desire to learn Persian 'in readiness for the Russian invasion' in 1827 (RAS IV/04 i.46), culminating in Rawlinson (1875) and the obsession of his later years; cf. Beasley (2005: 131–3), Duthie (1983), both dating the dawning of his alertness to Russia to (at the earliest) the 1860s.
- 33 Cf. T. Larsen (2009: 72–3), in relation to Layard's excavations.
- 34 BL Add. MSS 47620 p. 100; the notebook entitled 'Extracts and memoranda relating to the History, Geography, Literature and Antiquities of the East'.
- 35 Oppert praised as a 'young laborious German [who] will be a great Orientalist', letter to Edwin Norris, 14 March 1852, RAS III/07(6); condemned for his paper in *Journal Asiatique* ('flippant & offensive besides being untrue and incorrect' – and motivated by 'anti-English' feeling), 1 May 1852, RAS III/07(9); desire to give Oppert 'a slap' as he is 'insufferably vain and anti-English and really should be castigated', letter to Edwin Norris, 22 July 1852, RAS III/07(15); more positive opinion, letter to Edwin Norris, 3 August 1854, RAS III/10(14). See further (and for Hincks' sensitivity on the topic) M. T. Larsen (1996: 334; 1997: 351); see also M. T. Larsen (1997: 355–6) for Budge's (chauvinist) attribution of credit for decipherment to Rawlinson and Britain.
- 36 Letter to Edwin Norris, 17 October 1851, RAS III/06(02), continuing, 'Let them stick to Khorsabad (and Babylon too if they like)'; cf. letter to Viscount Mandeville, 16 February 1854, RAS III/11(3), on danger of Nineveh falling into the hands of 'French and American explorers.' For national competition, cf. G. Rawlinson (1898: 178).
- 37 BL Add. MSS 38981 286–8, Baghdad, 20 April 1953, cited by Larsen (1996: 333); cf. letter to Edwin Norris, 15 April 1853, RAS III/09(5), accusing Hincks of appropriating his 'lawful spoil'.
- 38 M. T. Larsen (1996: 84).
- 39 Henry Ross, a letter dated 26 January 1845, cited by M. T. Larsen (1996: 83).
- 40 His account opens with a portrait of his sons eagerly asking for stories, RGS HCR/15: 'Well it is no use pleading cuneiforms or sleeping or business, but Papa lays down his book and fancies himself in the days when he was as keen a sportsman as ever pursued a wild boar.'
- 41 As he partially acknowledged himself in a letter to his sister, 15 July 1835, cited by Borger (1975–8: 1), and by M. T. Larsen (1997: 341): 'My character is one of restless, insatiable ambition.' Contrast Beasley's apposite characterization of Rawlinson (2005: 134) as 'the most established of hotheads'.
- 42 RAS IV/04, i. 17.
- 43 RAS IV/04, i. 5; see also his account of the humiliation of attending a ball as a cadet, RAS IV/04, i. 52.
- 44 G. Rawlinson (1898: 27–34) for his 'road match'.
- 45 RAS IV/04, i. 20–1; 'the versification was smooth, but the tone rather too Byronic for our modern taste', according to George Rawlinson (1898: 25). Some sense of his literary tastes can be gleaned from the list of 100 volumes he purchased in advance

- of his voyage out, RGS HCR/15, including Scott's life of Napoleon, Gibbon, Scott's poems and Hazlitt's essays.
- 46 RAS IV/04, i. 66–7, adding 'it was entirely the manager's fault'.
- 47 See e.g. letters to Edwin Norris, 1 June 1852, RAS III/07(12) (quotation), 4 January 1853, RAS III/07(25), on Prussian Order of Merit.
- 48 G. Rawlinson (1898: 139): 'he was somewhat weary of governing half-civilised Orientals, and longed to get back to those linguistic and archaeological investigations which had engaged his attention and fascinated his imagination during the years 1833–39'.
- 49 Cited by Adkins (2003: 241).
- 50 Letters to Edwin Norris, 5 November 1852, RAS III/07(22), 5 September 1853, RAS III/09(14), 26 September 1853, RAS III/09(15) (first quotation), 5 November 1853, RAS III/09(17) (second quotation – 'but if duty calls I must forswear cuneiforms until the storm [of the impending Crimean War] is over'). Rawlinson's choice in 1843 of a post in Baghdad rather than in Nepal, described by Adkins (2003: 130) as 'sacrific[ing] his career for this obsession', needs also to be seen in this light.
- 51 Letter to Edwin Norris, 1 April 1855, RAS III/12(04).
- 52 See here esp. M. T. Larsen (1996: 222–3).
- 53 G. Rawlinson (1898: 261); this was a post for which he relied for much of his income. For this pattern of zigzagging in his career (the most marked instance of which is his resignation on an issue of principle from the post as Minister in Tehran that he had long craved), see also his brother's observation of his behaviour in old age, G. Rawlinson (1898: 294): 'He had an almost morbid fear of continuing to hold responsible offices after he had ceased to be fit for them, and repeatedly offered his resignation of the posts which he occupied.'
- 54 G. Rawlinson (1898: 147).
- 55 Letter to Edwin Norris, 4 February 1860, RAS III/15(03).
- 56 As he was advised to do by Edwin Norris, 15 December 1852, RAS III/07(24), answering 'but when one has a positive, unscrupulous and really shrewd antagonist like Hincks, it is difficult to know what to do'.
- 57 See e.g. his brother's characterization, G. Rawlinson (1898: 163), of his deliberate attempt to prevent 'obscurity or ambiguity' attaching to 'his position with respect to *Babylonian* and *Assyrian* decipherment, in which he believed that his claims to priority of discovery, if the facts were fully known, would be indisputable'.
- 58 Letter to Edwin Norris, 20 July 1847, RAS III/04/15; see also e.g. letters to Edwin Norris, October 1846, RAS III/04(06), 15 July 1848, RAS III/04(24), 16 January 1852, RAS III/07(01), 5 November 1852, RAS III/07(22), 15 December 1852, RAS III/07(24). As soon as he realized that his contribution to the decipherment of cuneiform was not as great as he had initially imagined, for example, he refocused his energies on the translation of the 'Great Inscription' of Bisitun: letter to Major General Briggs, 25 July 1839, RAS III/02(4).
- 59 RAS IV/04, i. 146 (cf. p. 126).
- 60 RAS IV/04, i. 50.
- 61 G. Rawlinson (1898: 114–18 at 115–16). Cf. his characterization of the Muslim population of Georgia in his 1859 report, BL IOR/L/PS/18/C2 ('No follower of Islam can willingly serve under an infidel Government').
- 62 RGS HCR/5 p. 1.
- 63 G. Rawlinson (1898: 277–8). See also his use of his Afghan experience to warn against employing Indian troops in other foreign contexts, *Hansard* Vol. 185 cc.

- 1032–64 at 1048–49 (26 February 1867), and in a memorandum on the organization of the native army in 1876, BL IOR L/MIL/17/5/1678.
- 64 RAS IV/04, i. 38–9, ii. 22–3. See also G. Rawlinson (1898: 132) for an account of Henry's desecrating a shrine no more than absolutely necessary.
- 65 *Hansard* Vol. 148 cc. 1436–37 (15 February 1858), commenting e.g. 'There was no such thing as public opinion or a feeling of nationality in India,' Vol. 185 cc. 827–41 (22 Feb. 1867), Vol. 187 1044–49 (24 May 1867), Vol. 149 cc. 346–78 at cc. 376–77 (18 March 1858).
- 66 BL IOR Neg 10861, 28 July 1877. In the context of such passages, Beasley's characterization (2005: 133) of Rawlinson as 'wrapping himself in the imperial flag' (in the context of his Abyssinian speech, for which see below) is perhaps simplistic.
- 67 G. Rawlinson (1898: 57).
- 68 For a balanced account of the confusions of this notorious episode (one which, coincidentally, involved both Layard and Hormuzd Rassam), see Rodgers (1984); for a fuller account, Rubenson (1976: esp. 172–287). A contemporary response to Rawlinson's (and his brother-in-law Henry Seymour's) interventions: Anon. (1867).
- 69 G. Rawlinson (1898: 250) = *Hansard* Vol. 189 cc. 237–44 (26 July 1867).
- 70 Contrast, however, his memorandum on the reorganization of the Western and North-Western Frontiers, BL IOR Neg 10861, 28 July 1877, where the effect of the old policy of detachment (in the light of the disaster of the Afghan War) is credited with damaging British prestige.
- 71 *Hansard* Vol. 190 cc. 384–5, 389–90 (28 November 1867).
- 72 G. Rawlinson (1898: 227). As Lord John Russell made clear in response to a parliamentary question on the reasons for Rawlinson's resignation, a central matter of principle for Rawlinson had been the 'giving of presents': G. Rawlinson (1898: 237).
- 73 G. Rawlinson (1898: 77).
- 74 G. Rawlinson (1898: 151–2, cf. p. xiv for a similar observation made concerning Sir John Malcolm); for Layard's own career and the history of his testy relations with Henry Rawlinson, see esp. M. T. Larsen (1996); Waterfield (1963).
- 75 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987: 129–30).
- 76 So, e.g. a large notebook from Baghdad, entitled 'Extracts and Memoranda relating to the History, Geography, Literature and Antiquities of the East', BL Add. MSS 47620.
- 77 H. C. Rawlinson (1840a; 1839); contrast Beasley (2005: 127), giving emphasis to Rawlinson's interest in antiquities. Herodotean ethnography: e.g. id. (1839: 105) on Bakhtiaris ('the most wild and barbarous of all the inhabitants of Persia' – although 'I have passed some pleasant days with their chiefs and derived much curious information from them') (1840a: 36: 'the Kurds are half savages, and have no idea of personal comfort').
- 78 G. Rawlinson (1885: 303).
- 79 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 643; cf. ii. 555).
- 80 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 555).
- 81 The question of the impact of Achaemenid Persian imperialism is still a live one: for a summary, see Harrison (2011: 113–16).
- 82 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 273n. 7, 273–74n. 9, both notes by Henry Rawlinson; ii. 506n. 3).
- 83 For this phenomenon more broadly, see, e.g. MacHaffie (1981: 321), Larsen (2004: 29–39) on Cook's tours. Stanley's *Jewish Church* makes this reasoning explicit

- (1863–5: i.12): ‘the unchanged habits of the East render it in this respect a kind of living Pompeii. The outward appearances, which in the case of the Greeks and Romans we know only through art and writing, through marble, fresco and parchment, in the case of Jewish history we know through the forms of actual men.’
- 84 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 274–5n. 2).
- 85 H. C. Rawlinson (1840b: 115).
- 86 H. C. Rawlinson (1840b: 65); cf. Beasley (2005: 128–9).
- 87 G. Rawlinson (1885: 433, 447). This characterization of Cambyses is at odds with Herodotus’ account in Book 3, but superficially in line with those of e.g. Briant (2002: 55–61).
- 88 See further Skinner in this volume.
- 89 G. Rawlinson (1885: 295); for Henry Rawlinson’s stance in relation to Russia, see H. C. Rawlinson (1875).
- 90 ‘Comparative geography of Persia’, RGS HCR/11 file 1 of 2, p. 43, commenting on ‘the necessity of a local knowledge to elaborate and complete the indistinct and partial notices that have been handed down to us by the Greeks of the ancient history and Geography of Persia’; the text is undated, but notes with the same title are dated 12 September 1834, RAS III/27.
- 91 G. Rawlinson (1898: 337). See Harrison (forthcoming) for the practical uses of geography and ethnography in Herodotus’ *Histories*.
- 92 Gikandi (1996) offers rich parallels for the pattern of finding confirmation of prior ethnographic views.
- 93 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 130–1).
- 94 BL IOR/L/PS/18/C2, 14 Nov. 1859, Tabriz, p. 11.
- 95 Tylor (1865: 1–2).
- 96 Cf. the distinction of Maine (1861: 22–3), as applied to India or China.
- 97 G. Rawlinson (1898: 52–5). For this pattern of disparagement of contemporary Persian government by comparison with ancient rulers, Harrison (2011: 101–3); cf. also the observations of Marchand (2009: 24): ‘European elites redirected their affections away from the living Orient, reinvesting them in the ancient one’.
- 98 G. Rawlinson (1885: 433; cf. 447, 474).
- 99 G. Rawlinson (1885: 37).
- 100 Cf. Beasley (2005: 130), identifying a shift (in the work of Henry Rawlinson) from a chronological structure to one based on race.
- 101 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 643–76, p. 676 for table of races).
- 102 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 156n. 7; 160n. 7; 319n. 3; ii. 279–80).
- 103 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 402–3), continuing: ‘We see how natural it was that there should be an intimate union, if not an absolute fusion, of two peoples so nearly allied; how it was likely that the name of either should apply to both; how they would have one law and one dress as well as one religion and one language, and would stand almost, if not quite upon a par, at the head of the other nations, who in language, religion, and descent were aliens.’
- 104 G. Rawlinson (1885: 316).
- 105 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 644). For Turanian, see Marchand (2009: 202n. 130).
- 106 G. Rawlinson (1885: 162–3).
- 107 G. Rawlinson (1885: 197), continuing: ‘by the side of Assyria, her colder and more correct neighbour, Babylonia showed herself a true child of the south – rich, glowing, careless of the laws of taste, bent on provoking admiration by the dazzling brilliancy of her appearance’.

- 108 BL IOR/L/PS/18/C2, 14 November 1859, Tabriz 11.
- 109 See, e.g. Turner (1981: 106–7) on Max Müller’s mythopoeic age of origins, or Bunsen’s thesis of the progress of religious consciousness, culminating in universal empires and the amalgamation of the ‘various ethnological Stocks’, 1868–70: iii. 309, 311.
- 110 Letter to Edwin Norris, 5 March 1854, RAS III/10(05). Rawlinson’s opinion of Gobineau changed in the light of his ‘talismanic’ interpretation of cuneiform texts, 1858; in a letter to Edwin Norris, 14 November 1865, RAS III/18(03), he responded to F. W. Newman’s 1865 essay on cuneiform (confronting Gobineau and Rawlinson to the latter’s advantage) that ‘any one who knows any thing at all about the subject is quite satisfied that Gobineau is a rank impostor’.
- 111 G. Rawlinson (1878: v–vi).
- 112 BL Add. MSS 38977, 219–24, 31 March 1847, cited by M. T. Larsen (1996: 164).
- 113 For, as Chadwick (1966–70: i. 544) characterized the broader situation of the impact of German biblical criticism: ‘We shall not beat this confederacy by donning the rusty battered armour of fathers or schoolmen. We need the weapons of Germans to defeat Germans.’
- 114 G. Rawlinson (1859: vi, spread of unbelief: p. ix); cf. id. (1878: iii). Cf. Chadwick’s observation (1966–70: i. 556) that Bampton lectures (such as Rawlinson 1859) tended to be ignored.
- 115 Shea and Whitla (2000) for *Essays and Reviews*, Morgan (1877); other likely targets are Lyell’s *Antiquity of Man* (1863), or the work of Bunsen (1848–67, 1868–70); for the intellectual context, see e.g. Gange (2006: 1089–91).
- 116 For primitive man was ‘made in the image of God – clever, thoughtful, intelligent, from the first, quick to invent tools and to improve them, early acquainted with fire and not too slow to discover its uses, and placed in a warm and fruitful regions, where life was supported with ease’, G. Rawlinson (1883: 28).
- 117 G. Rawlinson (1883); Rawlinson is at odds here with other voices characterizing Egyptian civilization as advanced, e.g. Petrie (1883: 173) on diamond-edged saws, cited by Gange (2006: 1091).
- 118 Anon. (1902).
- 119 See e.g. the observation of T. Larsen (2009: 71) that the story of Assyriology is usually told as one of gradual liberation from the Bible; cf. also Marchand (2009: 37) for exaggerated claims that ‘philological dustmen’ had carried Christianity away. For an overview of the intellectual context within Anglicanism, see Chadwick (1966–70: i. 527–72, ii. 1–39, emphasizing the role played by the historical analysis of the Old Testament, especially in period of 1861–5, at i. 528; ii. 3); cf. Morris (2005: 164–6), Livingston (2006).
- 120 Baden Powell’s contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, Shea and Whitla (2000: 252).
- 121 Jowett, ‘On the interpretation of scripture’, Shea and Whitla (2000: 488–9); see also Bunsen’s observation to his son, 23 July 1852, F. Bunsen (1868: ii. 285), that though Henry Rawlinson’s progress was impressive, the Prophets ‘are themselves the best key to their right understanding’.
- 122 T. Larsen (2011: 39). For recognition of the difficulty of basing conclusions on cuneiform inscriptions, see e.g. the observations of Robertson Smith (1882: 376–7); for the charge against Smith that he ignored cuneiform material, Rogerson (1984: 30).
- 123 Letter to Edward Hincks, 22 January 1853, cited by Davidson (1933: 53). For Layard’s own stance in relation to biblical authority, see e.g. Gange (2006: 1084),

- though contrast T. Larsen's characterization (2009: 77): 'far from being a stodgy Christian on a personal quest to prove the Bible true'. See also Bonomi (1852), or Budge's account (1925: 31–2) of the presentation by George Smith (3 December 1872) of the Deluge or Flood tablet to a group of leading society figures, including churchmen.
- 124 See e.g. Newman (1865: 589); Lytton (1867).
 - 125 Sayce (1894: x). For Sayce, see e.g. MacHaffie (1981: 323–8); Elliott (2003); Gange (2006: 1092–4); Kidd (2006: 168–9); Belton (2007).
 - 126 Sayce (1894: 558–9); Sayce (1909: 9) likewise asserts that the 'same critics who had dissected the Pentateuch and denied its historical veracity, had contemptuously scouted the philological attainments and historical discoveries of the Assyriologists'. See here Gange (2006) for the religious motivation behind the foundation of the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882; MacHaffie (1981) for archaeology as an obstacle to the popularization of Bible criticism. For a summary history of how biblical archaeology sought confirmation of Old Testament narratives well into the twentieth century, see Rogerson (1995: 155–6).
 - 127 The apt description of Gange (2006: 1093n. 36).
 - 128 G. Rawlinson (1861b: 237–8). Contrast the narrative of the 'breakdown of biblical chronology' of Southern (2004: 122–3).
 - 129 Letter to Edwin Norris, 4 September 1852, RAS III/07(19). Cf. M. T. Larsen (1997: 353); Henry Rawlinson 'took a very relaxed view of biblical fundamentalism'. Contrast the characterization of Holloway (2001: 6): 'Rawlinson confidently harmonized biblical, classical and historical Assyria into a richly woven tapestry of scriptural confirmation'.
 - 130 Letter to Prof. J. H. Wilson, 27 July 1846, RAS III/04/(4); letter to Edwin Norris, 2 February 1852, RAS III/07(03).
 - 131 BL Add. MSS 38979, 173–4, 27 March 1850, cited also by M. T. Larsen (1996: 201–2). For the accommodation of critical currents within Anglicanism in this period, see, e.g. Moore (1979); Morris (2005: 164–8); Livingston (2006).
 - 132 Cf. an earlier letter to Professor J. H. Wilson, 27 July 1846, RAS III/04(04), in which Henry Rawlinson expresses the hope that 'a certain party in England will not take alarm' at the possibility that the 'discoveries may throw discredit on Scripture Chronology'.
 - 133 As posited by M. T. Larsen (1996: 224; 1997: 352–3). At least in its more specific manifestations this hypothesis seems far-fetched: see e.g. M. T. Larsen (1996: 171) on Henry Rawlinson's identification of Numrud with Ninus.
 - 134 G. Rawlinson (1898: 303–4), continuing: 'but they were none the less truly founded on the great moral bases which now support, and which will perpetuate for ever, the cause of Christianity'.
 - 135 RAS IV/04, i. 39–40.
 - 136 RAS IV/04, ii. 22–3.
 - 137 RAS IV/04, i. 55–6: Newton, he continues, was the only man who made the trial, whereas Gibbon, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau and 'not least' Lord Byron were all men 'who imagined that their minds were capable of understanding everything'.
 - 138 I am sceptical of M. T. Larsen's suggestion (1996: 331) that Henry Rawlinson's understating of the contribution of Hormuzd Rassam's role was, in some simple sense, due to his being Oriental ('Rawlinson had little respect for Orientals', in Larsen's words); though his non-British background may have been significant, texts cited by Larsen suggest that the crucial factor was rather Rawlinson's perceived right

- of 'Seignorage'. For an account of Rassam's achievements in archaeology, see Reade (1993).
- 139 See, e.g. Maurice (1847), Rowland Williams' contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, Shea and Whitla (2000); Müller (1873); Smith (1894); for a survey of the developing field of the science of religion, Livingston (2006: 230–78).
 - 140 G. Rawlinson (1861a: 68–9).
 - 141 Cf. the lessons learnt by Sayce from his travels (1894: 558): 'Those who have been much in the East and have tried to mingle with the native population know well how utterly impossible it is for the European to look at the world with the same eyes as the Oriental. For a while indeed the European may fancy that he and the Oriental understand one another; but sooner or later a time comes when he is suddenly awakened from his dream, and finds himself in the presence of a mind which is as strange to him as would be the mind of an inhabitant of Saturn.'
 - 142 G. Rawlinson (1885: 170).
 - 143 G. Rawlinson (1861a: 74).
 - 144 BL Add. MSS 38977, 18–19, 5 August 1846 (the sentence ends illegibly); a second letter of the same date, BL Add. MSS 38977 20–1, adds the comment that 'they are certainly very fine, particularly ... in fact they are all of good execution.'
 - 145 So, for example, his description of Kabul and its vicinity as 'the most naturally beautiful ... I have seen in the world'; yet 'woefully defective ... in art', RGS HCR/10b, a small green notebook dated 1843. For Rawlinson's judgement on Nineveh, see esp. the observations of M. T. Larsen (1996: 103): 'He is occupied by the perspective of history, not the history of art, and his criteria are typical for his time, even though a new set of ideas were developing. Classical Greek art was the standard which had to be used in the evaluation of all art'; cf. M. T. Larsen (1996: 174–5) for the aftermath of this correspondence for debates on virtues of Assyrian art; pp. 208–9 for Rawlinson's visit to Nimrud on his way back to England (1849) where he revealed himself only to be interested in texts.
 - 146 BL Add. MSS 38977 25–7, 19 August 1846; he concedes 'a certain degree of excellence in the conception & execution of some of these sculptures – but when we come to value a certain degree won't do – we have specimens of the highest art – and anything short of that is, as a work of art and a work of art merely, valueless, for it can neither instruct nor enrapture us' (underlined in the original).
 - 147 Rawlinson expressed a similar opinion of the historical value of Layard's excavations nine months earlier, in a letter to Professor J. H. Wilson, Director of the Royal Asiatic Society, 27 November 1845, RAS III/04(1): 'in a few years we shall have the histories of the Assyrians & Babylonians more thoroughly explored or at any rate explorable than that of Egypt or that of Rome even before the time of the ten Tables.'
 - 148 M. T. Larsen (1996: 212).
 - 149 See, e.g. T. Larsen (2009: 74, 78). George Rawlinson's account of Layard balances praise for his practical skills with patronizing contempt for him as 'not a scholar, or a man of any great culture, or of any wide reading.'
 - 150 So, e.g. he characterizes himself as in the dark, BL Add. MSS 38979, 10–13, 18 July 1849, or as 'half inclined to chuck the whole of my Babylonian papers into the fire', BL Add. MSS 38977 119–21, December 1846.
 - 151 See e.g. Herodotus on duration of Assyrian Empire, letter to Edwin Norris, 28 May 1847, RAS III/04/13; Justin, letter to Edwin Norris, 20 Sept. 1847, RAS III/04/17; Berossus, Abydenus and Herodotus as 'the only authorities worth noticing', letter to Norris, 26 September 1853, RAS III/09(15). Cf. T. Larsen's over-stark hypothesis

- (2009: 80) that Rawlinson initially cleaved to Greek authorities out of a reluctance to rely on biblical sources.
- 152 Letters to Edwin Norris, 5 November 1851, RAS III/06(03) ('we ought here to have the names of Dejoces and Phaortes but I have not yet recognised them'); 15 April 1853, RAS III/09(05) on Herodotus' connection between Colchians and Egyptians; cf. G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 60, 64–5).
 - 153 Marchand (2009: 160, 194); see also her general observations, Marchand (2009: 201–2), citing Eduard Meyer.
 - 154 See e.g. H. C. Rawlinson (1852).
 - 155 F. W. Newman (1865: 604).
 - 156 Letter to Edwin Norris, 29 February 1852, RAS III/07(05). Likewise, Layard's account of *Nineveh and its Remains* claims to be 'restoring a part of the lost annals of Assyria' (1849: 482), and lays out in introduction the poor state of knowledge before recent discoveries in order to dramatise the advance, but he also laments the loss of Herodotus' *Assyrioi Logoi* (p. xv).
 - 157 H. Rawlinson (1846: 187–8); contrast, however, Rawlinson's uncynical response to traditions concerning Xerxes (by contrast to his father, 1846: 48): 'the ambition of perpetuating the victories of the Persian arms, which was the useful and ennobling object of the one, appears to have yielded, in the other, to a mere gratification of personal vanity'.
 - 158 BL Add. MSS 38979, 10–13, 18 July 1849, from Baghdad, to A. H. Layard; cf. letter to Edwin Norris, 28 May 1847, RAS III/04(13), in which he suggests that 'our hitherto received notions of Assyrian history, Ethnology and Ethnography will ... be found to be a mass of fables,' and asserts his inclination to accept Herodotus' word against other authorities.
 - 159 See, however, the observations of Harrison (2011: 116–17) on the casual use of 'Orientalism' within recent Achaemenid scholarship.
 - 160 G. Rawlinson (1885: 297–8, 502).
 - 161 G. Rawlinson (1885: 317; cf. 380, 419).
 - 162 See Marchand (2009: xxvii) for the East more broadly as a trump card.
 - 163 G. Rawlinson (1859: 56–7).
 - 164 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 67).
 - 165 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 66, 63–4): they 'intentionally garbled and falsified their own annals, while he, from his ignorance of their language, was unable to detect the imposture.' For Herodotus' likely monolingualism (though a reasonable case can be made, on the basis of the bilingual character of Halicarnassus, for his command of Carian), see Harrison (1998).
 - 166 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 69).
 - 167 G. Rawlinson (1885: 421).
 - 168 G. Rawlinson (1885: 316, 412, 444).
 - 169 G. Rawlinson (1885: 315).
 - 170 G. Rawlinson (1885: 259; cf. 188). For a number of parallel statements of the Near Eastern origin of classical arts and civilization, see Harrison (2011: 96–8); see also Layard's tentative concluding suggestion (1849: 481) of wide Assyrian influence ('Engaging theories, not devoid of plausibility, might be advanced').
 - 171 G. Rawlinson (1861a: 71, 79).
 - 172 G. Rawlinson (1859: 282).
 - 173 G. Rawlinson (1858–60: i. 498–9).
 - 174 See e.g. the remark of S. A. Cook, cited by Elliott-Binns (1936: 175), that 'ancient

history becomes ultimately of purely antiquarian significance unless Biblical history forms an integral part of it, or Robertson Smith's description (1881: viii) of the history of Israel as 'the most real and vivid of all histories'. Cf. Marchand (2009: 107) for expressions of the uniqueness of Israelite history in the German context. For the role of Greek history in developing standards of biblical criticism, see Rogerson (1984). See also Turner (1981: 141–2) for the relationship with the Homeric question; cf. also Marchand's survey (2009: 78–84) of 'Classics envy' and its role in Higher Criticism.

175 Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987: 117).

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The Scope of Ancient Ethnography

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The essays collected in this volume bring the thoroughly modern disciplinary concept of ethnography into conversation with strands of ancient literary discourse on foreign lands and peoples that to some extent cluster into repeat patterns. Ancient ethnographical discourse emerges not as a distinct genre but as something like a discrete zone in literary texts, the entry to which is signalled by more or less formulaic cues.¹ The authors ask important questions about the relative positions of 'us' and 'them' within this ancient literary discourse. Although ethnographical discourse exists outside literary texts, these non-literary ethnographies inhabit a prehistoric world. This prehistoric world exists before Herodotus' integration of ethnographical 'digressions' into his historical work begins to set out the parameters for classic, Greek literary ethnography, in the origins of ethnography at the interface of the Greek and Achaemenid worlds, or in the Campanian statuettes of 'Amazon' archers on the rim of a funerary urn.²

Debates about the extent to which ethnography existed as a conceptual category in classical antiquity have something in common with other dynamic modern discussions about the prehistory of concepts that do not clump neatly in antiquity, but can be assembled and pieced together into patterns that are vaguely recognizable to us, such as the economy or religion. Much will hang on the level of faith in the process of assembling and piecing together. Do we think of this process as reconstructing ancient logic, as imposing our own logic, or something in between, making a particular coherence by selecting and emphasizing certain elements as opposed to others? In the case of the economy or religion, thinking about our own conceptual and disciplinary parameters and assumptions has helped us get past this deadlock, for example by becoming aware of the ways in which Judaeo-Christian assumptions about religion will illuminate some aspects of another society and obscure others.³ In the case of ethnography, form as well as concept is at issue. Classic, twentieth-century ethnographical narratives, such as Evans-Pritchard's *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*, Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, or Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, seem to inform our sense of the parameters, form and content of such enquiry, as well as debates about the possible motivations behind it. While classical studies were in close dialogue with the early

science of anthropology, in recent years these models have more frequently been implicit rather than explicit.⁴

The essays by Skinner and Harrison make clear the long, complex and intertwined relationship between the modern study and reception of classical antiquity, European colonial projects of the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries and the foundations of modern ethnology and ethnography. Nevertheless, the real stimulus for this volume is the more recent, pioneering work of classical scholars in the 1980s, especially the critical analysis by François Hartog, in his *Le miroir d'Hérodote: essai sur la représentation de l'autre*, and Edith Hall, in her *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, of alterity, the Greek–barbarian polarity that was undeniably good to think with through much of classical antiquity. Such works illustrate the impact and benefits of the kinds of self-scrutiny in which many disciplines, especially within Humanities and amongst the ‘softer’ Social Studies, including social anthropology, were engaging for a number of excellent intellectual and political reasons.⁵ These pioneering works of classical scholarship shared with contemporary social anthropology and history a particular concern with problematizing formal and ‘scientific’ narrative through focus on the perspective, persona and cultural attitudes of the narrator.⁶

Insistence on the internal logic, one-sidedness and ethnocentrism of ancient literary texts has in very recent years come to sound, ironically, a little insular and ethnocentric itself, as if the authors concerned had not given thought to the existence of a world outside the text, or real interactions between Greeks, Romans and other peoples, or the consequences of limiting agency to the authors of Greek and Latin literature. On the contrary, such scholarship set up a badly needed and passionate challenge to an earlier acceptance of these texts as more or less straightforward ‘sources’ on the basis of which to reconstruct the local histories and cultures of ancient peoples who did not produce literary narratives or whose narratives do not survive. As such, these works functioned as exposés of problematic and selective modern receptions of ancient discourse as much as they unpacked the internal logics of the texts with which they were concerned.⁷ At the same time that textual studies were turning inwards to scrutinize narrative patterns and internal logics, there was an increasingly polemical tendency within modern archaeological studies, especially those focusing on the local cultures of the Roman Empire. Such studies continued an older aspiration to have local peoples ‘speak for themselves’, but reframed this aspiration explicitly in the language of post-colonialism. Critical of the use of ‘colonialist’ Greek and Latin literary texts to reconstruct local histories, and apparently unaware of the contemporary self-scrutiny of classical literary criticism, they sought alternative narrative frameworks, such as the anthropological study of comparative prehistoric cultures.⁸ The most disciplinarily self-aware literary and archaeological scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s agreed on one thing, and that was that texts were all about ‘us’, with substantial elision between the particular kinds of ethnocentrism exhibited in classical antiquity and the colonialism of the more recent past of classical scholarship.

A number of the essays in this volume suggest the vistas that open up when the importance of being alert to the internal logics and potential ethnocentrism of texts is retained, and when the identification of textual perspectives with a fixed and

more or less colonialist 'us' is called into question. These uncertainties about the boundaries and identity of 'us' run across the various disciplines that make up the study of classical antiquity. In literary studies, they have been encouraged by recent focus on the complexity of authorial self-representation, gaze and focalization, such as Harman's reading of gaze and focalization in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Oikonomopoulou's examination of Athenaeus' studied projection of persona in the Herodotean tradition, or Almagor's exploration of the work done by ethnographic 'digressions' in the context of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*.⁹

In historical and archaeological studies, they have been encouraged by focus on cultural connection and interchange, and more generally on the complexity of articulating identities in a mobile Mediterranean characterized by competing and interconnecting local and translocal powers, including kingdoms and empires.¹⁰ Thus, in this volume, Kim's essay locates the origins of the ethnographical habit itself not amongst Greek-speaking peoples, but at the interface of Greeks and the Achaemenid Empire. There are analogies here with revised models of 'Western' imperialism that begin with Athenian reception and reinterpretation of the imperial rituals, iconography and tributary system of Achaemenid kings.¹¹ For Vlassopoulos, Herodotus' representation of barbarian *logoi* is less of a wholesale invention or, at best, a translation into familiarly Greek terms, and more of a mediation, a meeting-point between Greek and Egyptian traditions and logics (among others). Rzepka's reading of fabulous or heroic stories of superhuman Aetolian individuals as rooted in Aetolian responses to a Greek stereotype of Aetolian 'cultural retardation' models the possibility of ancient literature doing rather more than representing stereotypical portraits of other peoples, engaging in their self-representation. His case study finds a partial analogy in Skinner's examination of eighteenth- to early twentieth-century Káfiristan, where British and Káfiri interests collude in identifying the Káfiri as descendants of Alexander's army or even of Alexander himself. For Kosmin, the gift of Indian elephants to Seleucus I by Chandragupta grows out of its original significance, sealing the deal between kings at the boundary of their realms, and is appropriated as the emblem of the Asianness of the Seleucid kingdom.

Skinner's essay on Káfiristan, along with Harrison's on the Rawlinson brothers, also shows the benefits of what happens when reception studies function as intellectual histories, as histories of ideas. In brief, it becomes much harder to sustain belief in a monolithic, 'colonial' 'us' at the critical eighteenth- to early twentieth-century foundation of our discipline in something approaching forms recognizable to us. When our antecedents become more individualized, and their ideas more culturally contingent, so it becomes harder to maintain any sense of simple disciplinary continuity, let alone a thread that connects 'us' as modern practitioners via our 'founding fathers' to any 'us' of classical antiquity.¹²

Complicating the notions of and relationship between 'them' and 'us' in these ways is enormously valuable. Nevertheless, I am struck by the contributors' adherence, by and large, to established parameters, to the signalled 'zone', of literary ethnography. Although we can very usefully scratch away at any monolithic notion of Greekness, the focus, with the single exception of Woolf's contribution on Tacitus' *Germania*, is on Greek texts written by Greek authors. The plurality of current ethnographical

approaches might encourage us to complicate more radically the separation of 'them' and 'us' by suggesting the model of self-accounts, auto-ethnographies. The contributions of Almagor and Harman to this volume, with their explorations of Greeks as both subjects and objects of depictions or gaze, go some way towards such a complication. While auto-ethnography has been used in a number of different senses in recent anthropological works, we can think usefully of the term as Mary Louise Pratt applied it, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), to the appropriation of European modes of writing about 'them' by imperial subjects.¹³ There are excellent parallels to this phenomenon in the accounts of the Hellenistic and Roman periods that are written in Greek and obviously engage in the Herodotean ethnographical tradition of writing about other peoples: Manetho's *Aegyptiaka*, Berossus' *Babyloniaka*, Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and *Against Apion* and, to some extent, Fabius Pictor's Roman history. These authors' accounts of Egypt, Babylon, the Jews and Rome respectively all illustrate the creative use of a Greek literary medium, explicit reinterpretation of Greek traditions, and flipping that tradition to speak in the first person as authorities rather than appearing as subjects or witnesses in Greek accounts.

Such auto-ethnographies raise the question of how far and in what sense the 'Greekness' of the ethnographical medium remains uppermost, long beyond questions about the origins of literary ethnography. Most obviously, the emergence of Latin ethnography and, I would add, the auto-ethnographical stance that runs through much of earlier Roman literature, suggests the extent to which the medium could be naturalized while self-consciously engaging in a much older tradition.¹⁴ In thinking through the implications of the Greek domination of ethnography, it might be beneficial to engage with increasingly sophisticated modelling of 'Hellenization' and 'Romanization' in archaeological contexts. The middle ground that is 'Hellenism' has been recognized and problematized here for 40 years or more, and the articulation of specific local identities through, in combination with, or juxtaposed to international expressive languages offers suggestive ways forward for the study of ancient textual ethnography. Models used to think about material culture might help us to think in a more liberated way about what happens to earlier, non-Greek ethnographical traditions. Do we see these as eliminated or absorbed by a uniquely Greek literary medium, or persisting within it, translated into international terms?¹⁵

From questions about the identity of authors, we might move to questions about how we might define an ethnographical account. By and large, contributors confine themselves to a literary zone generally framed as a 'digression', but occasionally (in the case of Kosmin on Megasthenes and Woolf on Tacitus' *Germania*) functioning as a stand-alone work, and marked out by increasingly standardized enquiry about categories including position/shape/lay of the land, produce, origins, appearance and behaviour of the people. This choice is easily defensible, as a broadly accepted understanding of the scope of the subject. But it does tend to predetermine the answers to certain questions, restricting the range of subjects and works. The contemporary disciplinary line between sociology and anthropology has become increasingly difficult to draw since the pioneering studies of urban communities in the United States in the earlier twentieth century: the separation of 'us' from 'them' becomes less self-evident

and more a matter of debate. Suburbia, online virtual groups or the corporate world might become a subject of ethnography as readily as a remote Amazonian group.¹⁶ In an analogous way, we might pause on the ancient boundary between writing ethnography and writing *politeiai*. Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* seems to straddle the two, as does Polybius' sixth book and his more general treatment of Roman customs and behaviour throughout the work.¹⁷ Just as Polybius' Romans hover on the boundary between Greeks and barbarians, so Polybius' writing of them combines post-Aristotelian analysis of their constitutional make-up with an interested outsider's perspective on the Roman upper classes' manipulation of the mob through superstition, the use of exempla to inspire courage, and extraordinary fiscal probity.¹⁸

We might also take a cue from contemporary ethnography's engagement in non-literary media, from recent scholarship on visual ethnographical displays in modern imperial contexts, and pursue further the focus on imperial visual contexts that proved to be so stimulating in questions about the origins of Greek written ethnographical accounts.¹⁹ Ethnographical display, the projection of a world-view that sets out and enforces notions of the relative positions of 'them' and 'us', does not end with Achaemenid representations of subject peoples on the Apadana stairways, with their differentiated clothing and ethnically appropriate 'gifts'. The Parthenon's artistic project seems actively to avoid representing the subjection of the Athenian 'allies', perhaps consciously differentiating the idealized Athenian model of rule from that of the Persians.²⁰ But Athenian artistic fascination with ethnographical difference and the opportunities offered by appropriating images and objects associated with Persian luxury, by depicting genealogical relationships with 'barbarians' through myths of gods and heroes, and by depicting victory in combat with 'barbarians', continued and refined older traditions within the archaic Greek world.²¹ This rich cultural capital that combined cosmopolitanism and ethnic superiority was broadly received in the Hellenistic world, a suggestive and adaptable language of self-fashioning for non-Greek peoples. From Pergamon to south Italy, local rulers aligned themselves and their peoples now in the role of 'Greeks', now in the role of 'barbarians'.²² Roman myths of origin are only the most notorious case, flirting between 'Greek' and 'barbarian' personae, and hovering right at the interface in assertions of Trojan descent.²³

The Romans would develop a distinctive ethnographical display culture both in the ephemeral, performance genre of the triumph, with its parade of lands and peoples, and in much more lasting arts of conquest.²⁴ The world of the Roman Empire was one in which generals and emperors boasted of expanding knowledge of lands and peoples, of surpassing the achievements of Alexander in not just travelling but possessing the world.²⁵ They would govern it with the application of considerations of the characters of its various inhabitants. Empire would substantially be secured and brokered by gifts, honours and embassies that figured a middle ground between 'them' and 'us', such as Rome's appropriately regal gifts to 'friendly' kings that imagined kingship between Roman 'survivals' from her regal past and the garb of contemporary, foreign kings.²⁶ In the imperial process, geographies were altered, and identities were reassigned and thrust upon people, by the redrawing of boundaries and reconfiguration into tax and provincial units, actions that might fly in the face of ethnographic means of establishing who everyone was.²⁷ At the level of the individual wealthy

household, these processes were mirrored in the renaming and assignment of roles to slaves.²⁸ The world of the Roman Empire, of the Republic as much as that of the Caesars, was at the same time potentially one of dynamic self-fashioning, of the ability to create and enter multiple ethnographic zones and, more brutally, to collude with and reinforce new cultural, social and ethnic hierarchies.²⁹

Expanding the scope of ethnography has real risks: where does our enquiry start, and where does it finish? But it also opens up some of the questions that can close into frustrating dead ends when applied only to signalled, literary ethnographic discourse, precisely the very promising questions that are raised by the contributions to this volume. I think, for example, of issues of diversity in agency and reception, in 'class', even more than in 'ethnic' terms. Looking beyond literature may provide opportunities to pursue further the intriguing hints of 'popular' ethnography that may be glimpsed occasionally in literature, such as the anecdote in Xenophon's *Anabasis* of an un-Greek sentiment alerting the audience to the pierced ears, 'like a Lydian', of the speaker (3.1.31–32).³⁰ It may relieve Tacitus' *Germania* of some of the pressure of representing the climax of the ethnographical tradition. The rhetoric of the *Germania* plays in fascinating ways with themes of space, empire and above all the processes and limits of cultural and moral conversion on the part of rulers and subjects alike, but the text frustrates when one asks questions about its instrumental relationship to any contemporary imperial project. Far from colluding in and advancing a science of imperialism, it loops back into conventions, if only to subvert them.³¹ The essays in this book show how much further we can go within literary ethnography. The opportunity is now ripe to take the extremely valuable questions raised by the contributors beyond literature and explore a history of ideas that is rather broader than a history of a particular set of literary tropes in surviving texts. The cross-fertilization of classical studies and anthropology has generally been enormously fruitful. However, the historical closeness of this relationship has sometimes made it hard to see the gaps between the classical world and that of the disciplinary foundations of modern anthropology, with its very particular intellectual, political and colonial baggage that makes it such a struggle to liberate ethnography from an exclusively Western perspective, from the constraints of 'scientific' writing. It might even be the case that the study of classical antiquity can once again inspire modern ethnographical approaches.

Notes

- 1 For ethnographical cues and formulae in ancient literary accounts, see, e.g. Norden (1920); Thomas (1982: 1–7); Rives (1999: 11–21).
- 2 Almagor and Skinner, 'Introduction', this volume, 8–9; Kim, this volume; Skinner (2012: 30–4).
- 3 On economy, see, famously, Finley (1973: 17–34); on religion, see, e.g. Rüpke (2007); cf. Woolf, this volume, 133–5.
- 4 Malinowski (1922); Mead (1928); Evans-Pritchard (1951). For explicit comparisons between Herodotus and modern anthropological practice, see, e.g. Myres (1908); Redfield (1985).

- 5 Hartog (1980); Hall (1989); cf., e.g. Rosellini and Saïd (1978); Nippel (1990); Cartledge (1993); for contemporary self-scrutiny within classics, cf. Almagor and Skinner, 'Introduction' to this volume, 3–4, with bibliography.
- 6 For classic problematization of anthropological and historical narrative, see, e.g. Clifford and Marcus (1986); White (1973; 1986; 1987).
- 7 See, e.g. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993: 132) on Hall (1989) as badly needed, writing from the point of view of an Achaemenid specialist.
- 8 For archaeologists' perceptions of the problem of classical texts as sources for the histories of non-Greek and non-Roman peoples, see, e.g. Spivey and Stoddart (1990: 11); Dyson (1991); Webster and Cooper (1996); Mattingly (1997); cf. Dench (2004); for the desire to reconstruct local peoples 'from their own point of view', see Salmon (1967: ix).
- 9 For treatments of texts that are particularly relevant to the present discussion, see, e.g. Davidson (1991) on Polybius, and Clarke (1997; 1999: 193–336) on Strabo.
- 10 Recent examples include Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987; 1993); Frankfurter (1998); Horden and Purcell (2000); Schwartz (2001); Whitmarsh (2010); Moyer (2011).
- 11 Cool Root (1985); Raaflaub (2009); Kim (2009: 24–5); cf. Kuhrt (2002).
- 12 Cf. Grafton and Marchand (1997) for criticism of intellectual history in Bernal (1987); excellent recent case studies of intellectual history of classical scholarship and enquiry include Marchand (1996; 2009); Ceserani (2012).
- 13 Cf., more broadly, intense recent interest in the contributions that have been made and can be made by non-Western ethnographers to modern anthropological enquiry. For example, brief comments in Clifford (1986: 9, 19); Reed-Danahay (2001); Ribeiro and Escobar (2006); Ntarangwi (2010).
- 14 Cf. Dench (2005: 61–9).
- 15 For example, Zanker (1976); Curti, Dench and Patterson (1996); Wallace-Hadrill (2008).
- 16 Lynd and Lynd (1929; 1937); Jackson (1987); Deegan (2001).
- 17 Cf. Aristotle *Politics* 1272b.24–1273b.27 for inclusion of Carthage in the context of discussion of the *polis*.
- 18 Polybius 6.52.10–56; 18, 35; Champion (2004).
- 19 For historical museum ethnographies, see, e.g. Coombes (1994); for modern ethnography and visual media, see, e.g. Tilley (2001); Geismar and Horst (2004).
- 20 Castriota (1992), 88–90; Ma (2009).
- 21 For example, Castriota (1992); Miller (1997); Cohen (2000).
- 22 For example, Dench (1995: 68–72); Curti, Dench and Patterson (1996: 183–4); Kuttner (2005); Miller (2005); Gruen (2011). I would also underline the emphasis on connection as well as distinction and ethnocentrism in the works of Bickerman (1952) and Lloyd (1966), both of which speak well to post-modern visions of connectivity and networks.
- 23 For example, Bremmer and Horsfall (1987); Gruen (1992); Erskine (2001); Dench (2005: 61–9).
- 24 Beard (2003; 2007); Dillon and Welch (2006).
- 25 Nicolet (1991).
- 26 Woolf (1994); Rawson (1975).
- 27 For example, Strabo 12.4.6 on the changes brought by successive rulers on the composition of tribes in northern Asia Minor, not least under Rome, where 'most' have lost 'their dialects and their names' with the redrawing of boundaries; cf. Ando (2010).

- 28 Solin (1996); Dench (2005: 280–1, 296).
- 29 Cf. the panorama of dining habits in Oikonomopoulou's reading of Athenaeus.
- 30 See essays in this volume by Vlassopoulos (pp. 52–3) and Harman (p. 83) for discussion of the anecdote in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.
- 31 Cf. Woolf (2011).

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